



The
YOUNG NIMRODS





HUNTING ADVENTURES ON LAND AND SEA

THE YOUNG NIMRODS
IN
NORTH AMERICA

A Book for Boys

BY
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"THE BOY TRAVELLERS IN THE FAR EAST: SIAM AND JAVA" &c.

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P R E F A C E.

IN preparing this volume for the press the author of "The Young Nimrods" has endeavored to instruct the boys of America in the ways of the hunter's life. He has made use of his own experience among the wild animals of our forests and plains, and has also drawn freely from the accounts of others. He has sought to amuse as well as to instruct, and hopes that the favor that has been extended to his work in other directions will be accorded to the present effort.

A fair amount of natural history has been interwoven with the stories of hunting and fishing; it has been the writer's aim to convey information in such form that it would not be open to the charge of dulness and prolixity, and to this end the dialogue form has been freely introduced. How far he has succeeded in this endeavor he leaves the reader to determine.

The illustrations have been taken from previous publications of Harper & Brothers, but in all instances they have been carefully chosen with a view to the correct representation of the objects described. The author is specially indebted to General Marcy's "Army Life on the Border," both for illustrations and for descriptions of certain phases of frontier life which that veteran officer has so graphically delineated. He is also under obligations to Mr. Murphy's "Sporting Adventures in the Far West," and to the accounts of life in the buffalo land by Mr. Theodore R. Davis.

Above all, he has sought to produce a volume that should be unexceptionable in point of morals, and may be freely placed in the hands of youth all over the land. All the adventures of George and Harry are

quite within the range of easy probability, and, wherever fiction has been introduced, it is made so clearly fictitious that its character can hardly be misunderstood.

With this brief explanation the author delivers "The Young Nimrods" to the care of the friends and school-mates of those youths, and hopes they will form a pleasant acquaintance.

T. W. K.

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THE YOUNG NIMRODS.

CHAPTER I.

INCIDENTS OF A TRAPPER'S LIFE.—FIRST HUNTING ADVENTURES OF THE YOUNG NIMRODS.

"**T**HAT'S a good morning's work," said Joe Fowler, as he threw his burden on the floor.

"A very good one indeed," replied his cousin Edward; "better than yesterday, when you had nothing at all."

"So it goes in hunting and trapping," Joe responded. "You must never count your game before you have it, or you will run a great risk of being disappointed."

So saying, he ranged his prizes side by side on the floor, and examined them critically. Two foxes, three minks, and a pair of musk-rats were the proceeds of the day's expedition. All the skins were of the best quality, and as Joe stroked the fur on each before laying it aside he gave a nod of approval.

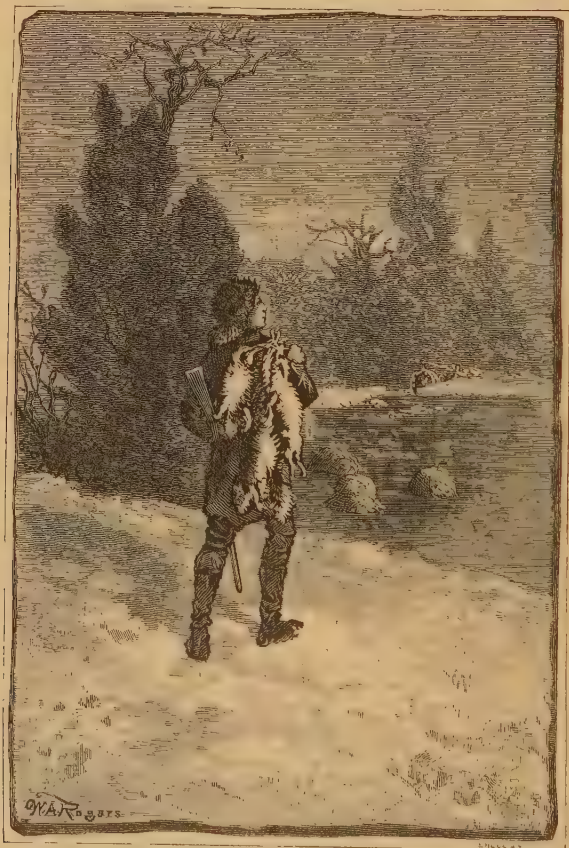
"Good pelts, every one," he remarked, as he rose and straightened himself. "And now to take them off."

Suiting the action to the word, he gathered the game together and went out-of-doors, followed by Edward. Evidently he was a skilful hand at removing the skins of fur-bearing animals, as he was through with his work in a short time. The operation was narrowly watched by his cousin and by his two nephews, George and Harry, who were freshly arrived from the city, and had never witnessed anything of the kind. They had many inquiries to make concerning hunting and trapping, and their uncle responded to all their questions with the utmost readiness.

"I would like to know," said Harry, "how you capture these animals. I see there is not a mark on any of the skins, and so you could not have shot them."

"The musk-rats were taken in steel-traps," was the reply, "but the minks in dead-falls. As for the foxes, they were poisoned."

"I know what a steel-trap is," Harry answered. "It has two jaws, with teeth that spring together suddenly when a little treadle is touched. You put the bait on this treadle, or arrange it so that the animal steps on it, and he is caught before he knows it. But I don't understand what you mean by a dead-fall."



JOE FOWLER VISITING HIS TRAPS.

"That is a very simple thing," his uncle replied; "any trapper can construct it in a few minutes. It is a log of wood so arranged that when a bait is touched the log falls on the neck of the animal, and kills him instantly. It does not injure the skin, and for that reason is preferable to a steel-trap or to shooting. Besides, steel-traps cost money, but a dead-

fall costs nothing. You carry a hatchet and a knife with you, and you have all the materials for constructing a dead-fall.

"The way I trap these animals is by constructing a line of dead-falls along the bank of the river a few hundred yards apart. Every morning, or at least three times a week, I visit the traps and secure anything that



THE HOUSE BY THE RIVER.

may be in them. It is not well to leave them more than two days at a time without a visit, as the fur may be injured by decomposition unless the weather is cold, and, besides, you run the risk of having the skin torn and destroyed by skunks or other animals. I have had several fine skins utterly ruined by these pests, and the only consolation I had was to set traps for them and catch them. If you like, you can go with me to-mor-

row and see how the dead-fall is made, and learn something of the pleasures of trapping."

The invitation was accepted without hesitation, and the boys promised to be ready to start early.

As soon as the skins had been removed from the captures of the morning, the boys started for a stroll in the woods.

The incident just narrated occurred one morning in early winter, on the bank of the Kennebec River, in Maine. Joe Fowler was a farmer in comfortable circumstances, and had a fondness for trapping and hunting; every winter he arranged his traps as soon as the cold weather had fairly set in, and it was his daily delight to visit them until the approach of spring. Game was fairly abundant in the neighborhood, as the region was not very thickly settled, and Joe was generally able to realize a snug little sum from the sale of his furs when the season ended. His cousin Edward spent much of his time on the farm, but was more devoted to scientific studies than to the cultivation of corn and potatoes. The two youths had just arrived from New York; and as they were recently out of school, and had never visited the country before, or at least that part of it, they were greatly interested in everything they saw.

When the skinning of the animals was ended, the boys went for a stroll in the woods not far from the house. Hardly had they entered the strip of forest before George espied a squirrel on the limb of a tree, leisurely cracking a nut and keeping an eye on the boys at the same time.

"Oh, don't I wish we could get him!" said George.

"And I too," Harry answered; "but how shall we do it?"

"Let's get a gun and shoot him," said George. And away he ran to the house to get the desired weapon.

He brought the gun, but before he was near enough to use it the squirrel ran into a hole in the tree, and was safe. The boys then discovered that the tree was hollow, and had an opening close to the ground. Harry suggested that they could smoke the squirrel out, and at it they went.

They kindled a fire of dry leaves at the base of the tree, and soon created a draught that filled the hollow with smoke. This was more than the squirrel could endure, and suddenly, while they were not expecting him, he sprang from the tree to another, and was out of sight in a few moments. The boys gave up their hunt, and returned to the house with the consolation that they had had the excitement of the chase, if they did not secure any game.

The adventure led to a little talk about squirrels and about wood-craft

in general. We will learn by-and-by what was said on the latter topic. Uncle Edward, who was usually called "the Doctor," more on account of his scientific attainments than for his medical skill, gave the boys some interesting information about the object of their pursuit in the hollow tree, and explained how it was the squirrel escaped so easily when he sprang from the tree after being driven out by the smoke.

"From what you say," he remarked, "I think it must have been of the species known as the flying-squirrel. He differs from the common red and gray squirrel in having a membrane that extends along each side of the body from the fore feet to the hinder ones. This membrane can be extended at pleasure, and by means of it he sails gracefully through the air, though he cannot fly as the birds do. When he is pursued



FLYING-SQUIRREL.



GRAY SQUIRREL.

he will traverse a forest with great rapidity, by going to the top of a tree, and then jumping in a slanting direction to the next. He lights on its trunk, and then climbs to the top, where he repeats his manœuvre; and where the trees are tall enough to give him a good impetus, he will easily go thirty or forty yards at a single leap. Your squirrel escaped in this way, and you would need to be pretty active to keep up with him. I have known one of them to travel a mile in this way in less than a quarter of an hour.

"The most common are the gray and red squirrels, the former being the larger, and they are found in nearly all parts of the United States. The gray one is hunted for his flesh, which is good eating, but it does not command a high price in the

market, and would not make a hunter rich, even if he killed a large number of squirrels every day. As for the red, he is not of much use, but he affords good sport to boys; probably the first game brought down by three-fourths of the country boys in New England is a red or gray squirrel, and more likely the former than the latter. It requires sharp eyes to discover him among the leaves of a tree, and very often there is quite a contest of skill between the hunter and the hunted. The squirrel clings

closely to the bark, and will manage to keep the tree between him and the boy that is seeking his life ; and it requires skilful manœuvring to get sight of him. In the Western States, where the most of the hunters use the rifle, they have adopted the practice of ‘barking the tree’ when they shoot squirrels ; but I don’t think you are likely to try it at present.”

Harry asked what was meant by “barking the tree.”

The Doctor explained that it consisted of killing the game without wounding him.

“But I can’t understand,” said Harry, “how you can shoot at a squirrel and kill him without wounding him.”

“Very simple when you know how,” was the reply. “The hunter shoots at the bark directly under the squirrel ; the concussion kills him, and throws his body into the air, so that it falls heavily to the ground. Even if all his life has not been driven out by the shock, it is pretty certain to be by the force of the fall.”

While this conversation was going on, the Doctor and the two youths had strolled from the house to the river’s bank. They were joined by Joe, who was interested in the adventure of the boys with the squirrel, and said they would soon have an opportunity to attack larger game. “One of these days,” said he, “we will try if we cannot find a bear for you ; but you must not think you can drive him as easily as you did the squirrel. And you must not get into the fix that one of our neighbors did one time when he was camping out in the forest in summer.”

“How was that ?”

“Judge Goodenow, who is well known throughout Maine, was the hero of the incident. He came into his camping-place at the foot of a large tree, and found that some animal had disturbed everything in search of a meal ; boots, hats, and toilet articles were scattered about, and the beast was looking around for something more to derange. As he saw the judge he sprang into the tree ; but the man of law was after him in an instant, and had the creature by the tail. Here he held on and on, and he said afterward that he did not know whether it was safer to hold on than to let go. It was a serious question what to do, and he afterward drew a picture of the scene, and labelled it, ‘What will he do with it ?’ The bear-hunter has the query before him sometimes, particularly when he is standing face to face with that savage animal ; if he runs, the bear will pursue and attack him, and if he stands still, he has a good chance of a battle in which he may get the worst of it. But we won’t be in a hurry to go on bear-hunts, as there is an abundance of squirrels and rabbits for you to practise on for the present.



"WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?"

"Perhaps we will see some rabbits on our journey among the traps to-morrow morning," he continued, "and may be fortunate enough to have a shot at them. But with your inexperience this is not very likely, as the rabbit is exceedingly timid, and very difficult to approach. The best way for hunting him is to drive him past a point where you are standing ready to shoot him; he runs fast, and you must be quick with your eye and fingers if you bring him down. We can get great numbers of rabbits in this region by snaring them, which we do by putting a slip-noose in their paths at the end of a bent stick; the rabbit enters the noose, and it catches him suddenly and swings him into the air, generally by the heels. But we don't consider that a proper way of taking them, as it gives great pain to the rabbit, since he may hang there for hours, vainly struggling to free himself, and finally he dies of suffocation and exhaustion."



THE RABBIT.

"You are quite right," said the Doctor. "No true hunter wishes to inflict needless pain, or will consent to its infliction by others. Some animals are sought for their fur, others for their flesh, and others, again, for both; in all cases it is the duty of the hunter to cause as little suffering as possible, even though the game he seeks may be a noxious animal, like the wolf or the lion."

"To continue about the rabbit," said Joe. "He is a timorous animal, and will flee at the least alarm. But, like many human beings, he is full of curiosity, and will often come to investigate any strange sound, after satisfying himself that there is no danger. A famous American artist



"WHOO!" [FROM A PAINTING BY WILLIAM H. BEARD.]

has painted a picture, representing some rabbits that have gathered to listen to an owl, who is sitting in the moonlight, and occasionally calling out 'Whoo!' They are puzzled by the noise, and it is quite possible that the owl is no less alarmed than they at the situation.

"There is a variety of rabbit, west of the Missouri River and on the Pacific coast, known as 'the jackass rabbit,' from his great size and the length of his ears. Hunters have shot at them in mistake for larger

game, and some Western men, whose narrations are open to doubt, profess to have been kicked over by them, and seriously hurt. The California rabbit is credited with this performance, and also with the possession of enormous speed. His legs are long, and he is not burdened with any superfluous flesh, and consequently there is no reason why he should not run as fast as he likes."

The boys were in favor of starting at once in pursuit of rabbits, but their enthusiasm was checked by Joe, who told them that the season was not sufficiently advanced for chasing the long-eared game, and therefore a regular hunt for them would not be in order. If they encountered any in their morning visit to the traps, they would try a shot at them, but the prospect was by no means certain.



CALIFORNIA RABBIT.



PROVIDING FOR HIS FAMILY.

In the evening the party sat around the fire of blazing logs in the broad fireplace of Joe's house, and the time was devoted to stories of hunting adventures until it was the hour for going to bed. The boys had no stories to tell, as their experiences in the sports of the chase were limited to the adventure with the squirrel in the hollow tree; but the Doctor and Joe had an abundant fund of reminiscences of forest and prairie, lake and stream, that three hours of conversation did not seem to exhaust in the least. Evidently, they were fond of hunting, or they would not have devoted so much time to it, and it was equal-

ly evident that their memories were good for the adventures through which they had passed.

"What would you like to hear about?" said Joe, to the boys, as the

CHAPTER II.

JOE FOWLER'S GREAT BEAR-HUNT. — ADVENTURE WITH A GRIZZLY IN CALIFORNIA.

"I WENT out one morning," Joe continued, "to set some traps on the banks of a little brook that comes into the river about five miles from here. I had my gun and two dogs along, and I carried a hatchet for making the traps, and wore my hunting-knife at my waist belt.

"I set three or four traps, and while I was making them the dogs were roving about, trying to scare up something. Now and then they disturbed a squirrel, and sent him chattering to the top of a tree; but I wasn't out for squirrels, and didn't pay much attention to what they were doing. By-and-by I heard them barking furiously, a little way off among the rocks, and when I called them they paid no attention to me.



TIGGE AND JACK DISCOVER THE GAME.

I knew, then, that they had something more than a squirrel or a rabbit, and as soon as I had finished the trap I was working on I went to see what they were about.

“There was old Tige on one rock, and Jack on another, their stumpy tails in the air, and the hair on their backs bristled up like the quills of a porcupine. There was a hole between the rocks, and it was partly cov-



IN THE BEAR'S EMBRACE.

ered by a log, and their barking and growling were directed to the hole. When I got near, I found that there was a good deal of noise coming from the inside; it wasn't to be mistaken for anything but the growling of a bear. I felt that I was in for it, and must fight the beast single-handed, and regretted that I had a shot-gun with me in place of a rifle. But I remembered that I had two or three charges of buck-shot in my

pocket, and while the dogs kept the bear occupied I drew the small shot that were in the gun, and put some buck-shot and a ball in their place.

"Then I got up to the log, and could see the eyes of the bear shining like two great coals of fire from the inside of the hole. I got the best aim I could, and fired; for an instant the air was full of smoke, and then the bear came rushing out of the den, and directly at me. I struck at her with my empty gun, and she hit it a blow with her paw, and sent it whirling a dozen yards away. The bear can strike a terrible blow with its fore paws; the way that gun whizzed through the air and against the rocks was an indication of the strength of the animal I was fighting with.

"The next moment she sprung on me and threw me to the ground, or, rather, across the log, and as I fell, she clasped her great shaggy paws around me to give me the death hug. I thought it was all up with me, and so it would have been if the dogs had not come to help me. She tried to tear me with her hind feet, while her fore paws were clinched around me; but her claws slipped on my trousers, which were of thick duck that had been oiled to keep out the rain, and each time she drew them up they slid harmlessly down to my boots.

"I called to the dogs, and they stopped barking, and concluded to do a little biting. One of them seized her by the ear, and the other by the hind leg; and they took such good hold, that they induced her to let go of me and turn on them. As she turned, they darted into the underbrush, and among the rocks, and worried her so as to keep her attention without allowing themselves to be hurt. I went for my gun, and found that it was useless, as the lock was broken by the force of the blow, and the barrel was bent. I dropped it and drew my hatchet from my waist belt, and then rushed forward to where the dogs and the bear were engaged.

"One dog was in front of the bear, and one in the rear. She did not see me till I was close at her side, and had my hatchet in the air ready for a blow. I took her by the back of the neck just as Tige jumped at her nose, and was lucky enough to bury the hatchet in her skull, so that she fell dead to the ground. Then I sat down and began to examine my wounds.

"To my surprise, I found I had only a few scratches that were really of no consequence, and then I took a look at the bear, which was of the largest size, and a female. I thought possibly she had young ones in the den, which would account for her fierceness, as the bear is always most savage when it has cubs that are not weaned. I went to the entrance of the den and listened, and, sure enough, I could hear some faint sounds that I thought were the cries of the young for their mother. Then I

realized what a peril I had gone through, and what a narrow escape mine had been."

"How was that?" Harry asked.

"There is no rage greater than that of a she-bear with cubs; and the bravest of hunters are unwilling to meet her under such circumstances. At other times a bear will generally endeavor to avoid an encounter with



THE DEADLY BLOW.

a man; but when it is a she-bear with young, she advances to the attack, and fights with desperation. It is the instinct of protection that prevails with nearly all the animal creation from man downward; and in the case of a bear, it is an instinct to be dreaded by the hunter. I have heard of an old hunter who was walking in the forest, and, on seeing some cubs at play, he shouldered his rifle, and remembered that he had business at

home. He was a man of courage; and while some who did not know the habits of the bear used to laugh at his cowardice, those who were skilled in wood-craft said he had merely shown a thoughtful prudence in shunning an encounter that might very likely end in his death.

"I rested a little to get my breath, and then proceeded to secure the cubs. I drew my hunting-knife, and held it behind me as a precaution, and in this way I backed into the den. The dogs stood outside, ready to assist me in case I got into trouble; but I was not at all fearful of an accident when the mother was lying dead on the ground and the cubs were safe inside."



EXPLORING THE DEN.

"Weren't you afraid that the bear's mate would be there?" one of the boys asked.

"I had very little fear of him, for two reasons," was the reply. "In the first place, the noise of our struggle would have drawn him outside in case he had been at home, and he would have come in for a share of the fight. Secondly, it is believed among hunters that, when the female bear has young cubs in her care, the male goes away to another abiding-place, and leaves her alone. Whether he hopes to escape the crying of the infants, or the anger of their mother, by leaving home; or whether he goes away so that his family can have all the room to themselves, I am unable

to say. Perhaps the known fierceness of the mother at this time may be vented on the head of the family, and he finds the house too warm for comfort. At all events, he goes a good distance off, and does not visit home again for some weeks.

"At any rate, he was not there in this particular case, and I had no trouble in getting to the bottom of the den. There I found a couple of



JOE'S PRIZES.

cubs so young that their eyes were not yet opened. They could not have been more than four or five days old; but they had a keen instinct that made them cry and fight when I tried to pick them up. They were about as large as a half-grown kitten, with skins as soft as silk, and with a wonderful amount of strength in their very juvenile muscles. I had some difficulty in getting them out of the den in consequence of their struggles, but succeeded at last, and brought them away. The dead carcass I left in care of the dogs, while

I went to the nearest farm for help to take my prize home. We skinned the bear where she lay and cut the meat into quarters, in order to facilitate its transportation; and four of us had all we wanted to do to take it to the road, where we could load it on a sled, and relieve our shoulders."

"What did you do with the cubs?" Harry inquired.

"I brought them home, and gave them to the man that looks after my cattle and attends to matters in general about the place. Very soon they forgot all about their mother and their den in the mountains, and were perfectly at home in their new quarters. They became very fond of John as soon as their eyes were opened, and learned to know his voice, and to come when he called them. He fed them on milk, and they devoured so much that John said it would require all one cow could produce to raise them. They had the free run of the house, and when John came in, he had only to call, 'Pets! Pets!' and they would come scampering to his side, and climbing on his knees. One would seize his thumb and suck away at it, while the other tried to reach his face and kiss him. They were quite jealous of each other, like young dogs, and a good many of their ways showed that the bear has a distant relation to the animal that hates him so naturally. My dogs were never very friendly toward the

infant bears; but they soon learned that the cubs were not to be harmed, and they did not venture to injure them.

“The cubs were quite fond of John’s year-old baby, and used to climb



JOHN AND HIS PETS.

into the cradle with it. But they would not let him sleep, and one of their favorite amusements was to seize his toes and suck them. The

youngster did not relish this, and would kick the intruder out; but a cub would hardly land on the floor before he started back again and renewed the attack on the toes. The boy and the cubs used to roll on the floor, and play for an hour or so without fatigue to the latter, though the boy sometimes found the sport too much for him.

"The cubs grew pretty fast, and it wasn't long before they were so



THE BOY AND THE CUBS.

strong that their play became dangerous for the urchin. Evidently they did not intend any mischief, but they were not aware of their strength, and used it without proper regard for the result. A bear is not a gentle beast to deal with, and the phrase 'rough as a bear' has a good deal of meaning. There is a story of a bear that was much attached to his master, and one day when the latter was asleep a fly lighted on his face. The

bear tried to brush away the fly so that his master should not be disturbed, but unfortunately his zeal overran his discretion, and he knocked the poor man's head off in the attempt.

"When the cubs became too large to keep around the house, John sold them to a travelling showman, and they are now in New York, or were at last accounts."

George asked what kind of a bear it was that his uncle had killed—whether it was black, brown, or grizzly.

"It was a black bear," was the reply. "The brown bear and the black are the only members of the ursine family that are found in this part of



YOUNG GRIZZLIES AT PLAY.

the country. The grizzly bear abounds in the Rocky Mountains, and west of them, but is never heard of east of the Missouri River, unless he has been brought there in a cage."

"The black bear," said the Doctor, "is known to the scientific world as *Ursus Americanus*, and is very much like the brown bear of Europe. He has a thick, black fur, and prefers vegetable to animal food. He is particularly fond of honey, and of nearly all the berries that grow in the Eastern States and Canada. He also eats green corn, and sometimes makes great havoc in the fields just as the corn is ripening. He can climb a tree with great rapidity, and it is not a good plan for a person pursued by an enraged bear to go up a tree, provided the bear is a black one."

"Don't the other bears climb trees as well?" one of the boys inquired.

"Some of them can," the Doctor answered; "but not all. The grizzly cannot do so, and he never tries; but when he has a man in a tree-top, he will wait for hours at the foot in hopes that he will come down. One of them kept me astride of a limb for nearly a whole day; and perhaps he would have remained all night if he had not been attracted away by a noise of an animal passing in the bushes not far off.

"The grizzly bear," he continued, "is the most ferocious of all the



A PAIR OF GRIZZLIES.

tribe, and he is also the largest, with a single exception. He is the same to America as the Bengal tiger to Asia, or the lion to Africa; and his scientific name is *Ursus horribilis*. His popular name comes from his color, which is a mixture of white, brown, and black. The polar bear is larger than the grizzly, but not so ferocious. The latter rarely attacks without provocation; but when he is assailed, he pursues, and fights to

the last; and he will carry away a large quantity of lead—larger than any other bear, unless it be his polar brother.

“Once when I was in California I was out with a party of gentlemen in pursuit of grizzlies. We came in sight of one quietly feeding on berries among the bushes. He started to go as we approached him, but he growled at us, as much as to say that he did not relish the disturbance. He was walking rapidly away, when one of our party rode forward and fired at him.

“The grizzly changed his course immediately, and instead of continuing his walk from us he ran toward us, and he ran fast too. As he came on, we gave him half a dozen bullets, but they did not have any effect in checking his progress; he was almost within his length of me, when a bullet, more successful than the rest, dropped him on his knees. This gave us time to put fresh cartridges in our rifles, and we gave him another round at close range. We thought he was finished, but he suddenly rose and made a dash at one of the party, whom he seized by the leg. Just at this moment I managed to put a ball in his head, with the muzzle of my rifle not more than a foot from his eye. That shot settled him, for he fell dead, and as he fell he released his hold of the man's leg. He had caused his teeth to meet in the flesh, but a stout boot which he was obliged to penetrate before reaching the leg had preserved the latter from serious injury, especially as my shot was delivered a second or so after he had taken hold.

“It requires a hunter to be very brave, or, rather, to possess more recklessness than bravery, to attack a grizzly single-handed; a young and ambitious hunter might do so, but an old one is apt to be cautious. I have known a grizzly to live an hour with three bullets through his lungs and one through his heart; and there is an instance on record of one that swum half a mile with two bullets in his heart, and a dozen in other parts of the body. The brain is the most vulnerable part of the animal; but it is difficult to reach, on account of the thickness and hardness of the skull. It is the tenacity of life in the grizzly, combined with his great ferocity, that makes him so dangerous to the solitary hunter. There is very little chance of killing him at the first shot, and, when wounded, he will make a hard and earnest fight for his life.

“There is a story in California of a man that once found the track of a grizzly bear, and followed it for a day and a half before giving it up. A friend asked him why he abandoned it, after following it so long, and he answered,

“‘The fact is, that track was getting a little too fresh to be safe.’

“I was once invited to join an excursion party in southern California,

whose object was a pleasant fortnight or so among the mountains of the coast range. We were a dozen or more, and there were not more than two or three of the lot that had any experience worth mentioning in hunting. We had a distinguished judge of the California courts; an



CAMPING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

officer of the army, with the rank of general; two lawyers well known in San Francisco; and the balance of the party included merchants, mining speculators, and a doctor of medicine. We made our camp in a pleasant valley in the mountains, and on the bank of a stream that supplied us

with an abundance of pure water. The first day the hunting members of the party went out and succeeded in shooting a deer and some smaller game, that gave us all the fresh meat we wanted.

"The second morning, just as the cook announced that breakfast was ready, and the members of the party were bringing their fresh appe-



"A GRIZZLY IN CAMP!"

tites to bear on the venison, there was a cry from some one that a grizzly was in the camp.

"All thought of breakfast was abandoned at once, and everybody looked out for his own safety.

"The judge sprung for the nearest tree, which was about seven feet in diameter, and without limbs for at least twenty yards from the ground. He made several attempts to throw his arms around it; but he might as well have tried to clasp the dome of the Capitol at Washington. He stuck to it for two or three minutes, and then ran for a tree that was better suited to an unskilful climber, and afforded him a safe retreat.



THE JUDGE'S EFFORT.

"The doctor ascended a little sapling that bent beneath him, and threatened to come to the ground. As he perceived his danger, he shouted aloud for help; but nobody seemed inclined to assist him, as each man was busy enough with his own affairs. His legs were tied in a knot around the trunk of the infant tree, and he clung with a desperation that is only inspired by fear of bodily harm.

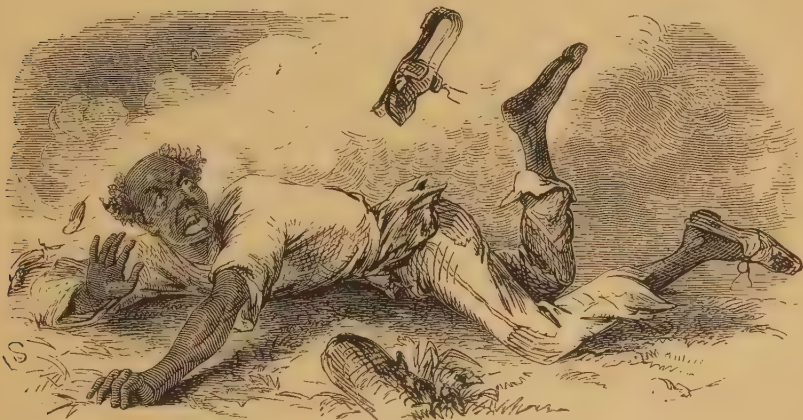
"The greatest alarm was shown by the old negro who officiated as cook. At the first signal of danger he threw himself on the ground, and flung his heels in the air so vigorously as to send his shoes flying over his back. One of them hit him between the shoulders, and he mistook the inanimate missile for the paw of the dreaded bear.

"'Lemme 'lone! lemme 'lone!' he yelled, in terror; 'gway fum here! gway fum here! I hain't done nuffin, lemme 'lone!' And he made such a noise, that any ordinary bear ought to have been frightened out of his wits.

"There was a loud rattling in the bushes, and evidently the bear was of great size, to judge by the way he made the underbrush bend and break beneath him. There would be a crashing of a few seconds, followed by a moment of partial silence, in which the bear was crouching to make his fatal leap into camp. Everybody was dreading the appearance of the carnivorous beast, and each was wondering who would



THE DOCTOR'S ESCAPE.



"GWAY FUM HERE!"

be eaten up first, with a quiet hope in his heart that it would be somebody else than himself. The general stood his ground for awhile, but it was not long before he caught the infection, and sought safety in the bushes, where he darted as though he had been a rabbit. He forgot that the creek lay just beyond the bushes, and the next instant he was in the water up to his waist, and making for the other side. 'The grizzly is not fond of water,' he remarked to himself, 'and perhaps this is the best place I could find.'

"Jack, the cook, kept up his yelling, and whenever he suspended it for want of breath, a fresh crash in the bushes would be sure to renew it. At length the suspense was ended by the appearance of the beast.



THE GENERAL'S DIVE.

"He dashed into camp, where we could see him distinctly; and when he showed himself, those that were in the tree-tops proceeded to come down as quickly as possible.

"The supposed grizzly proved to be a half-wild mule belonging to one of our teams. He had been picketed with a long rope, or lariat, after the custom in the Far West, and somehow his lariat had got loose, and allowed him to stray into the bushes. Very naturally the rope caught there, and he became entangled and thrown down, and it was while struggling to free himself from his toils that he made such a crashing as to set the timid ones to supposing it was a grizzly coming upon them.

"The judge vowed that he knew all the time it was only a mule, and

he simply climbed the tree to encourage the others and keep the fun going. The same explanation was given by the doctor; in fact, it was the only one he could give with any show of veracity, and the show was very faint indeed. The general said he usually took his bath at that time of the morning, and just as the alarm was raised the idea came over him that it was the proper hour for his plunge. Every one except the cook had an explanation to make; he, honest fellow, did not try to explain

further than that he 'was done scared out of his wits, and thought the day o' judgment had come sure.' During the rest of our stay in the mountains he had an antipathy for that particular mule, and never missed an opportunity to say something savage about him."



THE REAL GRIZZLY.

CHAPTER III.

VISITING THE TRAPS.—THE HUDSON'S BAY FUR COMPANY.

THE boys were up before daybreak, ready to start for the visit to the traps. They were impatient to be off, and the short delay which was interposed by their uncle Joe seemed to them a very long one. The Doctor concluded to be of the party, much to the delight of the boys, who knew they would receive some practical information concerning the habits of the animals they were seeking. The sun was just peering above the horizon when they left the house and went in the direction of the trapping-ground.

They followed the road along the bank of the river for about a mile, and then turned into a path through the woods. In a little while they came to a brook that rippled gently along under the ice, and close by the edge of it was one of Joe's dead-falls.

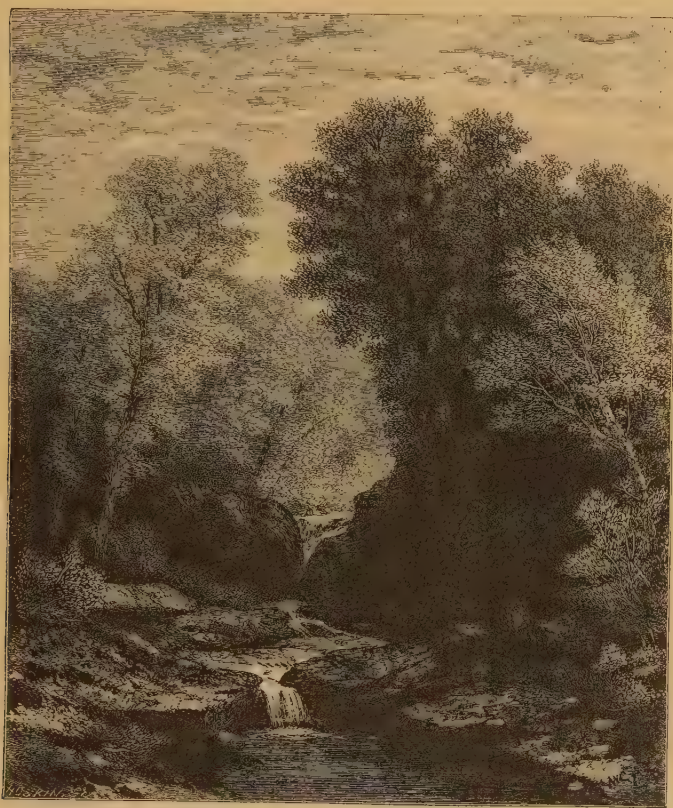
The dead-fall contained a mink, and it did not require more than five minutes for Joe to secure his prize, reset the trap, and remove, as much as possible, all traces of the capture. Harry requested the honor of transporting the burden, to which Joe readily assented; and the youth trudged proudly along with the mink slung over his shoulder after the manner of an old hunter.

Soon they came to another trap that had been visited by something, as was evident by the trampling of the light snow around it; but the bait was untouched, and the log remained in the position where it had been originally placed. Joe remarked that he would change it a little, as the minks had evidently discovered its character, and would not be likely to enter it where it stood. The Doctor and the boys sat down on the bank to watch the proposed change; and while Joe was busy, the Doctor told George to examine the capture of the morning, and describe it.

George turned the mink over and over in his hands, stroking the glossy fur, and admiring the slender proportions of its body. He was silent for a minute or two, and then said,

"He is about fourteen inches long from the nose to the base of the tail, and the tail by itself is about nine inches. The fur is a dark brown on the body, and the tail is nearly black; and there is a white spot on the chin, extending back to the throat. He has whiskers like a cat, and his ears are short and round, while his eyes are small, and almost in a line from his ears to his nose."

George paused, and then Harry took up the description.



THE HOME OF THE MINK.

"The mink's body is long and slender, and very much like a weasel's. The legs are short and strong, and each foot has five sharp claws. Can the mink climb a tree?"

"It rarely does," replied the Doctor, "but it will run up a tree when closely pursued, or when seeking game that it knows to be there. It always lives near the water, and can swim and dive with great rapidity. It

catches fish occasionally ; but its favorite food consists of mice and similar small animals, and it is very fond of birds. It comes into the farm-yards at night, and I have known a single mink to kill half a dozen chickens in a short time. You observe that the traps are baited with the heads of chickens, and if these are not to be had conveniently, the body of a small bird is an excellent substitute."

By this time the change of the dead-fall was completed, and the party moved on.

Their next visit was to a steel-trap that had been set for musquash, or musk-rats, as they are better known by the latter name. One was found firmly caught by the foreleg, and he was soon despatched by a blow on



A PAIR OF MUSK-RATS.

the head. A little farther on was another trap, which contained a leg but no body. The boys rolled their eyes in wonder at the discovery.

"That is the foot of a mink," said Joe.

"But how did it get there?" asked George.

"The mink got there, and when he found himself caught, he gnawed his leg off and escaped."

"Gnawed it off himself!"

"Yes ; there are several animals that do that when they are caught in steel-traps. The fox, mink, otter, wolverine, and ermine will do so, and I have known the odoriferous skunk to follow their example. On one occasion, when I had caught a skunk, he gnawed his leg on the wrong side of the jaws of the trap, and didn't get free after all."

Harry tried to find a resemblance between the mink and the musk-rat,

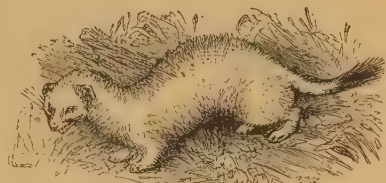
but couldn't discover anything to lead him to believe they were of the same family. So he questioned the Doctor about them.

"The musk-rat," replied the latter, "is not of the same family as the mink. It is a rodent, and its scientific name is *Fiber zibethicus*. It lives near the water like the mink, but spends much more time in it. It has a general resemblance to a rat, as its head is of the same shape, and its tail has no fur or hair to cover it. It eats all kinds of food like the rat, but prefers vegetables; you bait a mink trap with meat, as you have seen, but the best bait for the musk-rat is a parsnip or a sweet apple.

"The mink is called *Putorius vison* by the naturalists, and is of the same family as the weasel and the ermine; in fact, he resembles the ermine in shape, but is dark instead of white."

"Is the ermine white all the year," said one of the boys, "or only in winter?"

"He is of a dirty white, approaching brown, in summer," was the reply; "but when the snow falls he becomes of a snowy white, and then his fur is valuable. The fur of the mink is not worth much in summer, as it is coarse and loose; but when the winter sets in, and the frost covers the ground, it has the glossy appearance that makes it so pretty."



THE ERMINE.

"How much is a good skin worth?"

Harry asked.

"Prices vary a great deal," the Doc-

tor answered. "Just now a good mink-skin, taken at the right time of the year, will sell readily for three dollars. The fur is in fashion, and that is what makes it so high. I have seen the time when it was not easy to get fifty cents for one, and all because the fur was not sought by people in fashionable life.

"How does it happen," said George, "that the fashions change so much? I should think the fur would have the same warmth at one time as another, and anybody who liked it would be willing to wear it."

"That is a very good theory," responded the Doctor, with a smile, "but is very far from the practice. The most of the fur in the world, after it is taken from the animals that produce it, is worn for ornament rather than for warmth. Customs and fashions change in fur just as in everything else, and the desire for any particular kind is largely founded on the difficulty of obtaining it. Did you ever hear of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company?"

"I have read about it," the youth answered, "that it was a very rich Company, founded a long time ago for trading in furs in the northern part of this country."

"That is correct," said the Doctor. "The Hudson's Bay Company was chartered by King Charles II. of England, two hundred years ago, and continued to exist till 1869, when its rights were bought up by the Government of Canada. It still carries on the fur-trade, but has no monopoly over it, and no ownership of the country, with authority to make and enforce its own laws.

"Now this Company for a long time had the full control of the fur-trade, and made the fashions to suit itself. It would send orders to Canada that certain animals were not to be caught for five years. By the end of that time, the fur would be very scarce and dear in the London market, and consequently beyond the reach of all but the richest people. It would become the fashion, and as

soon as it had reached a very high figure the order would go out for that particular kind of fur to be brought to market. Meantime the animals that

produced it would grow very plentiful, by reason of their exemption from slaughter for five years, and great quantities would be obtained. The Company would take care not to spoil the market by throwing

in too great an amount, and so the price would be kept up for several years. While this was going on, some other kind of fur would be exempt, and become scarce and dear in its turn."

One of the boys wished to know if the furs were taken by the white men exclusively.

"Certainly not," said the Doctor. "The Indians, being the original



HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S AGENT.

inhabitants, were not deprived of their rights in the game in the forest, but on the contrary were encouraged to hunt for it. In winter they were



FUR-TRADERS ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

occupied in trapping and hunting, and in the spring they came to the Company's posts with their furs. They generally travelled in large parties, and were met outside the posts by the Company agents. A week or so before their arrival notice was sent to the fort, so that the agents could be ready for them."

"Do they use money or goods in trading with the Indians?" Harry inquired.

"Nearly all the purchases of furs were made with goods," the Doctor answered, "and very little money changed hands. The trading was conducted in a way that would hardly be proper in a large city, but was

very necessary when the Indians were to be dealt with. Only a few of them were admitted to the fort at a time, and whenever a transaction was going on between a trader and an Indian somebody was in sight with a loaded rifle ready to fire on the red man in case he displayed any hostility.

“The Indians, after being admitted to the fort, are restricted to a single apartment, called the Indian-room. From this they are let, two at a time, into the trade-room, which has a window with an iron grating suf-



ARRIVAL OF INDIAN HUNTERS.

ficiently large to permit the passage of articles of ordinary size, but too small for an Indian to strain himself through. The traders sit behind this grating, and one of them has a rifle ready for use in case of necessity. Indians are apt to become excited in the course of a commercial trans-

action, and sometimes they demonstrate their ideas of traffic by shooting those they are dealing with. This propensity is checked by the arrangement I have described.

"I remarked that the trade was conducted on the barter principle, the goods of the Company being given for skins brought by the Indians. It is only within the past few years that money has been used in traffic, and even now it has not been adopted as the standard of value. The



TRADE-ROOM IN BUSINESS HOURS.

standard of transactions is the beaver-skin, and all prices are regulated by it."

"Do they say a thing is worth so many beaver-skins, just as we would name its price in dollars?"

"Exactly. When the price of anything in skins is mentioned beavers are always understood. Thus, a horse may be worth seventy-five skins, a gun fifteen skins, a blanket ten, and so on, through the list of articles that are under negotiation."

"But what if an Indian has no beaver-skins to offer, though he may have those of other animals. What can he do then?"

"His other skins are taken at their proportionate value. A silver-fox may be estimated at four beavers, and would be counted as four skins; on the other hand, it might take two martens to equal a beaver, and so a marten would be counted as half a skin."



READING THE NEWS.

"The men that go there to live must find it rather lonesome," said one of the boys. "They must be scattered over a very wide country, and see but few new faces in the course of a year."

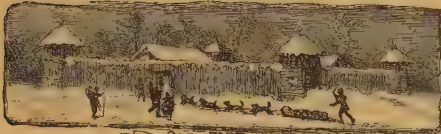
"That is quite true," the Doctor answered. "The territory under the Company's control, previous to the sale to Government in 1869, was estimated at 4,500,000 square miles, which is one-third greater than the whole of Europe."

"How many men are there to look after all this territory?"

"I am not certain as to the number, but think it is not more than 5000. The territory is divided into four great depart-

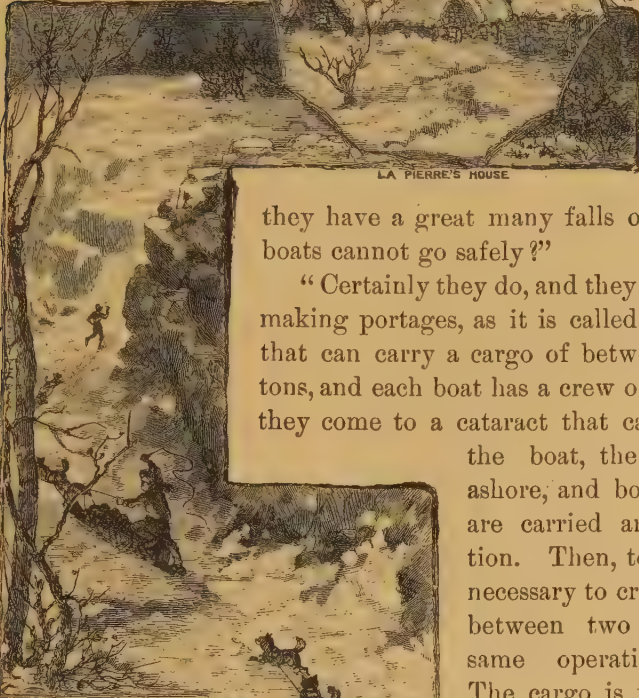
ments, and these are subdivided into fifty-three districts, each district being under the control of a supervising officer, who has charge of all the business of the establishment. Then the districts have smaller divisions, with trading-posts, where there is an officer with a staff of mechanics and other laborers, all the way from two to forty. The discipline is very rigid, and resembles that of an army more than anything else.

"The posts are from fifty to three hundred miles apart, and consequently there is not much communication between them. Once a year the mail is sent from Fort Garry, the most southerly fort, to La Pierre's house and Fort Yukon, in the far North. The distance is more than three thousand miles, and the mail is carried on sledges drawn by dogs, four of them to a sledge. Two sledges start in company, and sometimes three, and they travel about forty miles a day, along the frozen rivers and through the forests. From the principal posts along the route branch mails are sent off, and the Great Northern Packet goes on and on, leaving its bundles here and there, till at last it reaches the end of its journey, three months after its departure. You can be sure that the mail is very welcome to the men



OLD FORT YUKON

at the posts, and
the few newspa-



LA PIERRE'S HOUSE

they have a great many falls on the rivers where boats cannot go safely?"

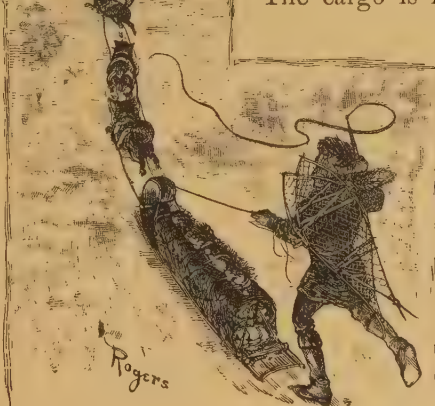
"Certainly they do, and they go around them by making portages, as it is called. They have boats that can carry a cargo of between three and four tons, and each boat has a crew of nine men. When they come to a cataract that cannot be passed by the boat, the latter is hauled ashore, and both boat and cargo are carried around the obstruction. Then, too, it is sometimes necessary to cross a height of land between two streams, and the same operation is performed.

The cargo is in packages, weighing one hundred pounds each, and the cargo for a boat consists of seventy-five of these packages or pieces. In crossing a portage, each man is supposed to be able to carry

THE GREAT NORTHERN PACKET.

pers that are carried to the interior are read and re-read till they drop to pieces."

"How do they transport the goods and furs to and



two of these packages: he arranges them so that the weight lies along his back from the crown of his head to the hips. A broad band of leather, called a 'portage strap,' passes across his forehead, and the ends of



MAKING A PORTAGE.

the strap are brought together to hold the pieces in place. Thus burdened, they go steadily along; and as they are all robust and healthy, the work evidently agrees with them."

This conversation occurred partly while Joe was arranging his muskrat traps, and partly as they walked slowly along by the bank of the brook. Suddenly Harry started, as though he had been bitten by a snake, and shouted,

"See there! See there! What's that?"

The rest of the party looked in the direction where Harry pointed. A rabbit was fleeing across the snow as fast as his legs would carry him, and in a very few seconds he had disappeared over the brow of a hillock. The boys wished to go in pursuit of him, but were checked by Joe and the Doctor. "It would be of no use," said the former, "to try to overtake him. He can run farther in an hour than you could in three, and it is quite likely that by this time he is safe in his den. We might dig him out if we knew where he lives; but as he has not given us his street and number, and we have no picks and shovels, our chance of getting him is very slight; besides, he is of very little use, as his fur does not bring enough in the market to pay for saving it, and the meat is not the best in the world."



A RABBIT WARREN.

In accordance with Joe's advice, the rabbit was not followed, somewhat to Harry's disappointment, who hoped to see what kind of a dwelling the little fellow had. The Doctor explained to him that the rabbit generally makes his warren in a hill-side, and hollows it out in such a way that the rain cannot possibly disturb him. "First it has a sharp descent," he said, "and then it rises rapidly and narrows somewhat. At the top it is enlarged, so as to give plenty of room for the head of the house and his family, which is generally pretty numerous. When pursued by man, or fox, or other animal, the rabbit makes the best possible speed for home, and when he is once inside his doors, he is safe from the majority of intruders."

CHAPTER IV.

A FOX-HUNT.

THE walk was continued, and more traps were visited, till the party had made a circuit of not far from five miles. They had crossed from the head of the brook they ascended to the head of another, which they followed to its entrance into the river; and when all the traps had been examined they were not more than a mile from home. Experienced hunters endeavor to arrange their traps in such a way as to avoid long walks to go to or from the scene of their operations; they always like to set them in circuits, so that the end of their tour brings them near the starting-point.

It was George's turn to find something exciting, and he found it. Just as they were leaving the last trap, he saw an animal running leisurely over the hill, not a hundred yards away. It was crossing a small clearing in the forest, and cantered easily along, as though out for a pleasant promenade.

George was about to shout, but the Doctor checked him, as he had seen the strange object a moment before it came in the range of the youth's eyes.

"That's a fox," whispered the Doctor; "keep still, and see how gracefully he runs."

The Doctor stood still, and so did Joe, and they made a signal for the boys to do likewise. All four were as motionless as statues, and evidently the fox did not see them, as he circled around the clearing and passed within a dozen yards of the boys. After making this circuit, he disappeared in the forest at right angles to the way he came.

"What a beautiful head he has!" said George, after the fox had gone. "His eyes are clear and bright, his nose is pointed, and the position of his ears gives him an expression of cunning. I have seen his picture before, but never knew how handsome he really is."

"'As cunning as a fox,' is an old adage," Uncle Joe remarked, "and you have just seen an instance of the animal's cunning."



REYNARD'S PORTRAIT.

"How was that?" Harry asked.

"The turning he made in the clearing," Joe replied. "It was to throw the dogs off the scent. Listen! there they come; I hear their barking. Stand perfectly still, and see what they will do."

The baying of the dogs was every moment more and more distinct, and in a few minutes four hounds came out of the forest on the track of the fox. On they went across the clearing as fast as they could run, and away from the track.

Very soon they found they were off the scent, and back they came to the clearing. They followed the fence the wrong way, and made the entire circuit of the open space before they found the track and renewed the scent. They lost some fifteen or twenty minutes by this manoeuvre of the fox, and it is quite possible, as the Doctor suggested, that this trick gave him time to get to a place of safety.

"Does he have a den like the rabbit?" one of the boys asked.

"Yes; he lives underground, but does not always make his own burrow. He prefers to appropriate the deserted den of a rabbit or badger, which he enlarges to suit his own taste and make room for his family. Here he brings chickens from the farm-houses, or any other plunder he can secure, and he has the reputation of being a good provider for his young. And he has not one but several retreats scattered over a considerable area, so that if he is pursued he may retire for safety. Some-

times these retreats will be miles apart, and known to several foxes, who seem to consider them common property."

"Why did you tell us to stand perfectly still when the fox came in sight?"

"Because I wanted you to see the fox as closely as possible. A moving object attracts his attention, but a still one does not. If you remain



THE FOX AND HIS FAMILY.

motionless in full view of him, he may take you for a stump of a tree and come quite near, provided the wind is blowing from him to you and does not give him the scent. One morning I was out in the field, and saw a fox searching among the logs for his breakfast. I stood perfectly still, and he did not observe me at all; he came within ten feet of me, as the wind happened to be right, and I could have shot him easily with a pistol. Finally I moved my arm suddenly, and he scampered away at the best possible speed."

"Do you have regular fox-hunts here, Doctor, such as we read about in books?" Harry inquired.

"No, not in this part of the country," was the Doctor's reply. "In the Middle and Southern States the fox is hunted on horseback the same as in England, but the North is too hilly, and has too many forests to permit that kind of sport. He is hunted here with dogs, as you have seen this morning, and the hunter, after arousing the fox, remains quietly at the place of starting, and shoots the animal on his return. The fox generally travels in a circle, and is pretty sure to come back to the place he left.

"England is the great country for the pursuit of fox-hunting as a fashionable pastime. English gentlemen keep large packs of fox-hounds, for which enormous prices are often paid, and great attention is given to the rearing and training of horses for hunting purposes. Sometimes the cost is so heavy that several gentlemen combine and take turns in maintaining the hounds for a single district, and also share the expense of the general equipment for hunting operations. From twelve to twenty hounds form a pack, and their aggregate value may be fairly estimated at five thousand dollars. Single dogs have been sold for four

or five hundred dollars, and sometimes even higher prices than these have been obtained. But the cost of the hounds and their support is a small item compared with that of maintaining a stud of horses suitable for the field, and many a man has dissipated a small fortune in the pleasures of the chase.

"Fox-hunting in the Southern States of America is followed on the general principles of the sport in England; but there is less attention to details, and the hounds and horses are not maintained at so great expense. A day is appointed for the hunt, and the place of meeting is chosen. Ladies, as well as gentlemen, join in the sport, and when all are assembled at 'the meet,' the scene is a lively one. Every gentleman sends his hounds, and there is usually a negro from each plantation to act as 'whipper-in,' or manager of the dogs.



FOX-HOUNDS AT HOME.

“The hounds are started out to find a fox, and as soon as they get on the trail of one their baying resounds through the forest or across the open country. When he is roused up from his slumbers—for he does



MEETING FOR A FOX-HUNT.

nearly all his sleeping in the day, and devotes the night to his depredations—he starts for the nearest thicket or cover. The hunters are kept in waiting till the signal comes from the master of the hunt that the chase has fairly begun, and then the excitement shows itself.

“Over fences, across brooks, through thickets, among fields, under the trees, the fox leads the dogs, and the dogs lead the hunters. Mishaps are frequent, and every year there is a record somewhere of broken bones and other accidents more or less serious. In England it happens not infrequently that some member of the nobility ends his fox-hunting with a broken neck; but as the supply of noblemen is abundant, the sport goes on without restriction. In America there is less attempt at leaping

fences and broad brooks and ditches, but there is quite enough of it to make the chase exciting and dangerous. One of the awkward points in a fox-hunt is when your horse stops suddenly on the edge of a ditch or brook, and sends you plunging over his head into the water. Ditches and brooks are famous for having mud at the bottom, and sometimes the unlucky plunger finds himself plastered from head to foot with a sticky mass that makes him anything but handsome.

“On a hot day, a badly trained horse has a fondness for lying down in the first stream he comes to, for the sake of cooling himself in the water. The unlucky rider of such a beast loses for the moment all in-



IN FULL CHASE.

terest in the hunt, and devotes his energies to saving himself from a wetting. Meantime the fox is going over the hills and far away, and the more fortunate hunters are leaving the victim of the brook in the background.

“Many an unskilled hunter comes to grief at fences, and a good many

skilled ones as well. To 'take a fence' or a gate requires a good horse and a good rider; and these are not always found together. I was once in a hunting-party where the most daring rider was a lady. She 'took the fence' several times in succession, while the more timorous, or perhaps not so well-mounted, gentlemen preferred to open a gate and pass



"TAKING THE FENCE."

quietly through. The worst thing in the way of fences is one that has a wet ditch on the side opposite from where you jump, and you often take a leap and find yourself in a heap in the water, and perhaps with your horse on top of you.

"The comical side of a fox-hunt is as interesting as the sportive one; and if there are many verdant gentlemen in the party, and they are mounted on unruly horses, there will certainly be some laughable incidents. Occasionally a frightened rider deserts his saddle, and clings to the mane or neck of his steed, and thus gives the animal an excellent chance to pitch him headlong at will. The unfortunate hero of the overthrow vows

that he will never show himself again at a fox-hunt—certainly not till he has a proper horse to ride.

“The fox displays a great deal of sagacity in eluding his pursuers. A volume might be filled with the stories of his cunning, and even then the testimony concerning it would be far from exhausted. I will give you a few of them.

“There was once in South Carolina a fox that baffled the hunters many times in succession. They would start him in the forest where he lived, and he always ran to a certain hill, and on this hill the trail was invariably lost. No matter what the weather was, or where he was started, the chase had to be given up below this hill. Everybody was puzzled, and finally a gentleman determined to solve the mystery.

“He went there one morning when a hunting-party was about to start,



BAD RIDING.

and concealed himself in the top of a tree near the spot where the scent was usually lost. Here he watched and waited some time, and at last heard the baying of the hounds. On they came, with Reynard a few hundred yards in advance.

“He rose over the top of the hill, looked around to see how near the dogs were, and then trotted about half-way down the slope to a large rock that had a depression in the centre. A vigorous jump landed him on the rock, and he lay down in the hollow.

“As the dogs ran down the hill, their speed was naturally quickened; they went bounding along past the rock, and disappeared in the valley below. As soon as they were fairly out of sight, the fox rose slowly to

see if the coast was clear, and then jumped from the rock, and followed his original track back to his forest home.

“In another instance, there was a very large field where a gray fox could be started at any time, but they always lost him at a certain plantation two or three miles away. The trail would be perfectly clear up to a corner of a field close to a forest, and from that point no trace of it could be found. The thing happened so often that it was much discussed, and a great many theories were advanced. Some of the superstitious people in that part of the country began to believe that the fox had extraordinary powers, and they looked on him with so much veneration that they refused to join in hunting him.

“The hunters began to be ashamed of themselves for being baffled so often, and the dogs caught the infection, and did not run with the eagerness they displayed when pursuing other foxes. The mystery was cleared up by a gentleman who went to the field in question and watched the movements of the cunning fox.

“The animal came on a little in advance of the hounds, and when near the corner he mounted the fence and walked along the top of it to the corner. Of course he was expected to jump off and run into the forest; but this was precisely what he did not do.

“There was a dead tree in the field about sixteen feet from the fence; it leaned over a little, and there was a large knot on the trunk about ten feet from the ground. Running along the fence to get the necessary momentum, the fox gave a spring that carried him to the tree, where he grasped the knot with his paws, and then climbed into the top and disappeared. He remained there quietly till the hunting-party had gone past and were out of hearing, and then calmly descended and went home.

“The gentleman was so well pleased with the sagacity of the fox that he kept the matter a secret. Many and many a time the fox disappeared there in the same way, till at last somebody else suspected that the dead tree had something to do with the mystery; so he cut it down one day just before a hunt was to come off, and then the fox was captured.

“The chase of the fox continues till his strength is exhausted, and he is run down by the hounds and captured. It is a great point with hunters to be ‘in at the death’ in a fox-hunt; the tail or ‘brush’ is generally given to the first lady who arrives on the spot; and if there are no ladies, the most gallant and foremost of the gentlemen receives it. The dogs are allowed to tear the body of the poor fox in order to encourage them in future hunts, and the sport generally ends by the assemblage of the party at a convenient place for an out-door lunch.”

George asked how far a fox could run under such circumstances, and how long a time was usually required for his capture.

"That is not very easy to say," the Doctor replied; "there is an in-



"IN AT THE DEATH."

stance on record in England of a fox that ran forty-five miles in five hours, and another that ran a little more than sixty miles in six hours and a half. In Virginia a fox has been known to run fifty miles and then escape, and runs of twenty-five and thirty miles are not at all uncommon. Generally, however, a hunt is concluded at the end of eight or ten miles, and sometimes the run is so short that the dogs and hunters are not fairly warned to their work before the animal is taken and the sport is over.

"The fox displays quite as much cunning in hunting his game as he does in escaping from those who are trying to make game of him. He will lie for hours in the bushes at the edge of a pond where there are ducks or geese, and by waving the bushy end of his tail he excites their curiosity, and causes them to come near enough to enable him to seize

one of them in his jaws. He takes the unlucky bird by the neck, throws the body over his shoulder, and darts off for his home, where his family is waiting for him. If this trick fails, he will take a bunch of grass or moss in his jaws so as to cover his nose, which is the only part of him above the water; thus disguised, he swims slowly into the flock, and they never suspect their danger till it is too late. Sometimes he will pretend to be dead, and he has been known to lie perfectly still while a piece of burning paper was held so close to his nose that the end of it was blistered.

“There is an old story of a farmer who found a fox in his poultry-yard one morning that had eaten so heartily of the chickens that he was



FOXES ON THE SEA-SHORE.

unable to get out through the hole where he had entered. He lay there to all appearances perfectly dead. The farmer kicked him, and turned him over two or three times with his foot, and then seized him by the tail and flung him outside. He was much surprised to see the fox come suddenly to life and run away to the forest, and you may be sure that the cunning fellow was careful not to eat too much the next time he entered a poultry-yard.

“Foxes that live by the sea-side are very fond of oysters and clams, and they break the hard shells by throwing them into the air and allowing them to fall on the rocks. They have been known to catch crabs and lobsters by putting their tails into the water where they could be

seized, and then dragging their prey to the shore. Sometimes the fox miscalculates the strength of his victim, and emerges from his experiment in fishing with a portion of his tail bitten off; but this is a very rare occurrence, as the fox is too proud of the fine appearance of his brush to run the risk of a serious injury to it."



THE FOX FAMILY ABROAD.

CHAPTER V.

THE COUNTRY STORE.—A TRIP TO THE MOUNTAINS.

THE boys were much delighted with their morning's sport. The traps had given them a mink and a musk-rat—not a very formidable prize—and Joe remarked that they should hope for better luck next time. They had seen and learned a great deal that was new to them, and besides, their appetites had been sharpened to a condition of great keenness by their long walk in the pure air of the morning.

They went out with Joe the next day and the next, to visit his traps and assist him in bringing home his captures. They hunted squirrels in the forest, but without any success till near the end of the week, when they managed to shoot one on the tree where they had practised the process of smoking out on the day after their arrival. They became interested in the ways of the country, and used to accompany the farmer's boy when he gave the inhabitants of the barn-yard their breakfast. Horses and cattle assembled at the foot of the ladder leading to the corn-crib, and when the youth appeared, with his arms filled with ears of corn, there was an impatient raising of heads and jostling of sides which greatly amused the visitors from the city.

One afternoon they strolled to the village, a couple of miles away, and spent an hour in the country store, where several of the villagers were congregated. Squire Tappan, the lawyer of the neighborhood, was seated by the stove discussing politics with an old farmer, who was not of the squire's party, greatly to the edification of Sam Folsom, who hugged the stove on the other side, and took in the heat of the glowing fire along with that of the discussion. There was a steady buzz of conversation in other parts of the establishment, and especially at the counter, where one woman was examining a codfish, and descanting on its demerits, and another and younger one was purchasing a few yards of ribbon. Deacon Sanborn hesitated over a curry-comb; and the deacon's youngest boy, left to himself for a few minutes, said sweet things to Lizzie Webster, who was not far from his own age. The shelves were packed with boxes,

crockery, rolls of calico, and other textile fabrics, cans of tea, and jars of pickles, and the rafters were hung with a varied assortment of shawls,



BREAKFAST AT THE CORN-CRIB.

pails, brushes, boots, pans, and the thousand and one articles that go to make up the stock of a store in the country.

"What a curious place!" said Harry to George, as they walked homeward. "Uncle Joe says the country store is the centre of country life, and I can easily believe it."

"Evidently it is the centre where all can meet," George replied, "and they go there because they have no other place to go to. It was very interesting to pass an hour in the store, but I think we should find it tiresome after awhile."

their way toward the house. When they arrived they asked the proposed question of Uncle Joe concerning the characters they had seen at the store.

"You are quite right about the village doctor," said Joe, in response to their inquiry. "He is a great man in his own and his neighbors' opinion, and he is deserving of their esteem. His name is Dr. Brown, and he has never been two hundred miles from here in all his life, but he has been a very hard student, and is an authority among us for all scientific and philosophical questions. His egotism is not at all unnatural, as he has been accustomed from his youth to be considered, what he really is, wiser than the great majority of those around him. He is like a king who lives in an atmosphere of flattery, and is always addressed as



THE RURAL CLERK.

'Majesty,' so that it is quite in the course of things for him to regard his existence as a matter of divine right."

"So much for the doctor," Joe continued. "Did you see a jolly, smiling, English-looking man they called Judge?"

"Yes, he came in just before we left. We heard somebody call him Judge, and that is all."

"I can tell you a funny story about him," said Joe. "He is liked by everybody for his invariable good-humor, and is famous for an occasional practical joke at the expense of his neighbors."

"Three or four winters ago there was an unusual number of idlers who used to sit around the stove



DOCTOR BROWN.

in the store, and they made so close a circle that it was not easy to get into it to get warm. The store-keeper and clerk found them taking up too much room, and one day they entered into a conspiracy with the Judge 'to give the boys a raise,' as he expressed it.

"It was a cold, frosty morning, with a light snow that had fallen during the night. The Judge came into the store and approached the circle,



THE JUDGE.

but no one moved to make room for him. There was a little space directly in front of the door of the stove, and the Judge took his place there and opened the door so that more heat would come into the room.

"'Fine morning for rabbit shooting, Judge,' the clerk remarked.

"'Yes,' the Judge answered; 'I am just going out to try the rabbits with the Colonel.'

"Saying this, he took a powder canister from his pocket and unscrewed the top. Pouring a tea-

spoonful of powder into the palm of his hand, he looked at it a moment, commenting on its quality, and then threw it on the fire.

"The explosion caused most of the sitters to rise an inch or two from their seats, but they quickly subsided, some of them muttering inaudibly about the disturbance.

"'Stop that, Judge, stop that!' said the store-keeper. 'Better blow a man's house up while you are about it. You ought to know better than to do such a thing as that.'

"The Judge pretended to be very angry, and flung the canister into the stove.

"The circle was broken up instantly, and never a party of men ran out-of-doors quicker than did that one. They ran and ran, looking back over their shoulders for the falling timbers of the building, and not one of them stopped for a hundred yards at least. When at a safe distance they looked around, but as they heard no explosion, and saw nothing dropping, they concluded there was some mistake about it. The bravest of the party ventured to the door of the store, peered in, and asked,

"'Hain't she busted yet?'

"There sat the Judge in front of the stove, watching the canister as

calmly as though it had been a roasting potato. The only powder it had contained was the spoonful that was thrown into the fire at first. The rest of the contents consisted of sawdust and sand, and neither of these articles is considered dangerous as an explosive."

During the evening Joe informed the boys that he had arranged to take them on a bear-hunt. They were to start early the following morning for a place in the mountains about thirty miles away, where a friend of Joe's lived who had a special fondness for hunting bears. They would spend two or three days there, and he hoped they would be fortunate enough to find a bear or two among the rocks and trees of the mountains. "And if we don't get a bear," said Joe, "we can console ourselves as the man did who took his bull to market."

"How was that?"

"The story goes that a farmer once took a young and powerful bull to the market-town, ten or twelve miles away. He undertook to lead the animal, and was dragged over fences, and across fields by the unruly beast, so that he presented a sorry spectacle when he reached the market. Nobody wanted to buy, and he had an equally lively time taking the bull home again. Next day a neighbor inquired if he had sold his bull.

"No," he answered, 'I didn't sell him, but I had a splendid drive out of him.'

"And even if we don't get any bears, we will have a fine drive, and learn a good deal from my old friend."

But the morning brought rain, or, rather, the rain began to fall during the night, and was pouring rapidly from the sky when the boys rose with the early dawn. It was evident that a "thaw" had set in, and the little snow that lay on the ground was soon melted away. The start to the mountains was postponed, much to the disappointment of the boys, who had counted on a charming ride through the hills.



"HAIN'T SHE BUSTED YET?"

"Never mind, boys," said Joe, when he announced that the journey must be put off, "we shall be able to go in a day or two, and the absence of the snow in the mountains will make our hunt all the easier."

The next day the rain ceased, and the wind blew from the north-west, and dried the mud very fast. By the next day the roads were in good condition for travelling, and our friends were ready to start. The Doctor remained behind, and consequently the party consisted of Joe and the



JOE'S MOUNTAIN FRIEND.

boys. A light wagon drawn by a pair of horses carried them rapidly through the forest and over the hills, and just at dusk they reached the hunting-lodge, where they were warmly welcomed by the owner.

He was a man of a somewhat uncertain age, with a full, round face, and a body that appeared at first glance a trifle too heavy for mountain

climbing. He was dressed in a suit of buckskin, with fringes at the seams, and when his hat was off a bare spot was revealed on the top of his head, like a clearing in a forest. Joe introduced him as Mr. Bridgman, but addressed him familiarly as "Jack." They were old friends,



A QUESTION OF DINNER.

and had been together in many a hunt through the woods of Maine and New Hampshire, and in Canada. Jack had taken his abode for the winter in the locality where the boys found him, and he had already captured half a dozen bears, and a fair number of foxes and other game.

He had followed Joe's example of the previous year, by killing a bear with cubs, and bringing the little fellows home. He gave one of them to a settler, who lived a mile or two away from Jack's house, and wanted the cub as a playfellow for his boy. The boy and the cub got along very well for a time, except when there was anything to be eaten, and then there was a dispute as to who should have possession and satisfy his appetite first.

"They like mush and milk," said the settler one day, when Jack asked him how the boy and the cub were prospering, "and whenever a bowl of it is ready they have a regular set-to, and sometimes tip it over before

they are done quarrelling. The boy usually comes out first-best, but it won't be long before the bear will be strongest. When that time comes the bear will have to go to market, and if there is nobody who wants to buy him he will be cut up into steaks.

"Last week the mush-kettle was set out to cool, and the boy and cub had a fine time scrapin' it out. They went into it in a hurry, and when they got through they were the worst-looking pair you ever saw. They were all mush from head to foot, and my wife says that if it happens again, either the boy or the bear will have to leave the house and take to the woods."

As soon as the greetings were over, Jack invited the new arrivals to enter his quarters and make themselves at home. They found a log-house with four rooms, one of which served as kitchen, another as dining and general sitting room; a third was appropriated to visitors; while the



SCRAPING THE KETTLE.

fourth was the particular resort of Jack himself. It was hung with all sorts of hunting implements, and was also used as a store-room for many of the articles that could not be stowed away in the kitchen. The space was somewhat restricted, as the cabin was small, and Jack was not very

methodical in his arrangements. None of the rooms were more than twelve feet square, and the kitchen was the smallest of all.

Jack's companions in this wilderness home were a negro and his wife, who attended to all the household and other occupations, and left Jack free to wander in the forest and do what he pleased. They were lodged



JACK'S ROOM.

in a building close by the house, and behind it was another structure of logs, which served as a stable for a single cow and for horses that happened to come there, as on the present occasion. They were known as Bill and Fanny, and came originally from one of the Southern States in the expectation of acquiring a fortune "way up North;" they discovered, like many others in this world, that fortunes cannot always be made by emigrating; but with the cheerfulness peculiar to their race they accepted the situation, and set about finding something that could make them a living. Jack encountered them one day when he was looking for somebody to work around his hunting-lodge, and it did not take long to make a bargain. They had a little garden a few hundred yards from the house, and with pigs and chickens, and a cow to keep them company, they were quite contented in their mountain home. The cold of the winters was their great dread, as it was far more severe than anything they had ever known in their old home, and the first fall of snow always brought tears to the eyes of Fanny.

"I don't like this yere snow at all," she would say, "and wish it

wouldn't come 'round so every year. Up here in de North, when a thing is 'real white, you say it's 'white as snow;' down South, we says 'white as



BILL AS OUT-DOOR COOK.

cotton,' as that's the whitest thing we knows of where dere ain't no snow. Wish I'd never knowed how white de snow is by seeing of it."

Bill used to go with Jack on his hunting excursions, especially in sum-

mer, and it was his great delight to make things comfortable for his employer. He was a capital cook, and the only point on which there was any jealousy between Bill and Fanny was when the subject of boiling potatoes or preparing other table supplies came under discussion. Fanny claimed that, with a good fire in the kitchen, she could boil potatoes better than any other living woman, or man either. Bill did not believe in a kitchen in-doors, and said that the best way to cook potatoes was in a kettle in the open air. Whenever Jack wanted a discussion to while away the time, he was in the habit of starting the subject of cookery, and leading it around so that Bill and Fanny would become entangled in it. By-and-by it would be necessary to pour oil on the troubled waters, which he would do by praising Fanny as the best kitchen cook he had ever known, and declaring that Bill had no superior for cooking in camp.



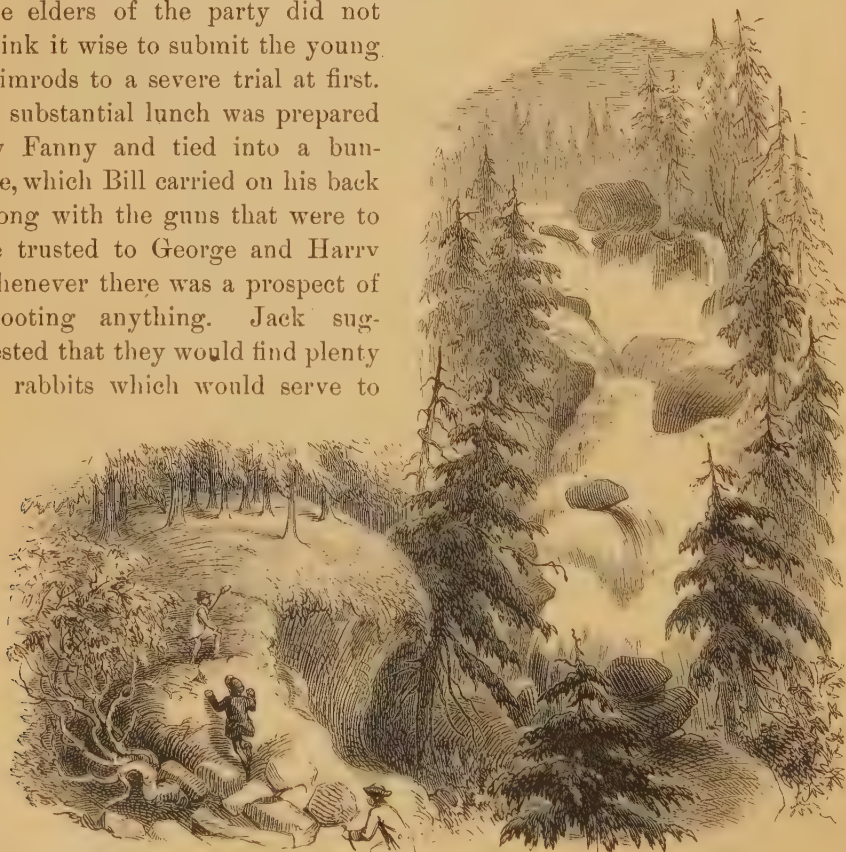
FANNY IN THE KITCHEN.

Supper was served soon after the arrival of Joe and the boys, and when it was over the party sat around the fire in the principal room for an hour or two, to talk over plans for the next day. Jack told the boys they must not expect too much, as the country was by no means a wilderness, and even the bears were becoming civilized. "If things go on for twenty years to come as they have in the twenty years just ended," said Jack, "we may expect that the bears will be learning to read and write, and be regular subscribers to the papers. They must either adopt the manners of good society or be killed off, and probably they would prefer the former alternative."

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOYS' FIRST BEAR-HUNT.

EVERYBODY rose early the next morning, and before the sun was up the party had finished breakfast, and was ready to start for the haunts of the bear. It was not intended to stay out overnight on the mountains, as the cold was too severe to sleep in the open air, and the elders of the party did not think it wise to submit the young Nimrods to a severe trial at first. A substantial lunch was prepared by Fanny and tied into a bundle, which Bill carried on his back along with the guns that were to be trusted to George and Harry whenever there was a prospect of shooting anything. Jack suggested that they would find plenty of rabbits which would serve to



CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN.

piece out the lunch and give them all the fresh meat they wanted for satisfying their appetites.

They left the little valley where Jack's house stood, and were soon climbing among the pines that covered the mountains almost to their summits. For a part of the distance their way led near a stream swollen by the recent rain, and that came tumbling down in a torrent which dashed among the rocks and was lashed into foam. Harry narrowly escaped a slip that would have been fatal; he was walking within a few inches of the brink of the stream, when a stone gave way beneath one of his feet and threw him on his side. He had the presence of mind to seize the projecting root of a tree, and thus save himself from a plunge among the rocks, where the water was surging and boiling furiously.

They had nearly two hours of this kind of work, till they reached a place where the ground became less broken, and the trees more abundant. Jack called a halt, and said they were in the region of game; they would see plenty of rabbits and as the snow had been carried away by the re-



COOKING THE RABBITS.

cent rains, and the rabbits had put on their winter dress of white, there would be no difficulty in detecting them. While he spoke one came running leisurely along through the forest, and, when within a short distance of the party, he was bowled over by Jack's rifle.

Two or three more were shot, and then the guns were carefully loaded, and the bear-hunt began. Bill was left to build a fire, and cook some of the rabbits for lunch, while the four hunters moved off in the direction of a thicket which Jack said was a favorite haunt of the bears.

Bill dressed his rabbits, and in a little while he had three of them fastened on sticks and roasting over the fire. Bill always claimed that the best way to cook a rabbit was to roast him. "None of yer stewed rabbit for me," he used to say; "I wants him roasted on a stick, and if you turn him around once in awhile, so as to do all sides of him alike, there hain't no better bird in the world."

The hunters walked cautiously through the forest for half a mile or more without seeing any indications of bears. At length they reached a spot where the ground was quite clear of leaves and grass, and worn as



THE BEARS' BALL-ROOM.

smooth as a threshing-floor. The peculiar appearance of the place roused the curiosity of the boys, and one of them asked what was the cause of it.

"Well," said Jack, after a pause, "it's a bears' ball-room."

"A bears' ball-room!" exclaimed Harry, in astonishment.

"Yes, that's what they call it," was the reply. "The old hunters say that the bears get together once in awhile and have a regular dance, just like civilized folks. I never saw one of these dances myself, but I know hunters who have seen them, and they say that the bears choose partners,

and waltz off as though they had been to dancing-school and knew all about it. They have a real good time all by themselves, and anybody who attempts to interfere with them is in danger of getting the worst of it, unless he has plenty of friends about.

"There's a hunter named Rowzey, who lives over on the other side of the mountains, and he tells some very tough stories about the bears' dance.

"He says that one time he was out in the woods and heard a loud noise that surprised him, as he had never heard anything of the kind before. He crept up and saw a lot of bears gathered together for a dance. Some were dancing in the middle of the floor; others were leaning against the trees, as though tired out and taking a nap; and one was sprawled on the ground, without any strength left in his muscles. Some were climbing up into the trees, and others had rigged up a swing, where they were having a jolly time of it.

"Rowzey says the sight made his blood run cold and warm at the same moment. He knew if he disturbed them and they caught sight of him, he would have a hard time to get away; but, on the other hand, he could not see so much good bear-meat going to waste.

"He thought things over a few minutes while the bears were having their fun, and then decided what to do.

"He crept up as close as he could, and while two of the bears were having a friendly scuffle, he threw a stone at one of them so as to hit him on the head where the other bear was clawing him.

"The bear that was hit,' says Rowzey, 'thought it was the other one that did it, and so he hit back with his best licks. Of course the other one wouldn't stand that sort of thing, and in less than ten seconds they were tearing each other to pieces.

"The other bears joined in, the music and dancing stopped, and it was a free fight all round; half a hundred bears doing their level best to murder each other. I didn't feel called on to interfere, except to shoot the largest of them and give the little fellows a fair chance. The fight lasted nearly an hour, and when it was over there were twenty-three dead bears there, and some of them were so chewed up you couldn't say whether they were bears or coarse hash. I went for my neighbors and gathered in the bear-meat, and we had a hard day's work to take it to the settlement.

"Some of those bears weighed three hundred pounds apiece. We had no Fairbanks patent scales in the woods, but we had all been weighed at one time or another, and each man knew his figure to a pound. We put a plank over a stump, and with a carcass on one end and a man on

the other, we got that bear-meat down to a dot. Jim Kelsey weighed just three hundred pounds, and there were two bears that tipped him exactly. Fairbanks may be the standard of the world for weighing-machines, but they can't beat Jim Kelsey at one end of a plank and an old bear at the other.'

"I cannot vouch for the correctness of Rowzey's stories, but they are certainly interesting. If he is to be believed, he has had more hair-breadth



ROWZEY'S PATENT BALANCE.

escapes than anybody else in the mountains. The last time I saw him he was telling how he was watching for bears one day, and was nearly killed by a drove of deer.

"He said he was sitting under a bush where there were signs of his favorite game, when suddenly there was a crashing in the bushes. He hadn't time to rise to defend himself before three deer were upon him, and one of them, an old buck with horns like a pine-tree, jumped fairly over his head, and kicked him with his hind feet as he passed. In proof of the occurrence Rowzey showed me a hole in the shoulder of his coat, which he said was caused by the hoofs of the buck, and of course I could not doubt the truth of his story after that."

At the conclusion of this narrative of the wonderful adventures of Rowzey, the party moved on. Up to this time the dogs had been rather quiet, but they now began to show signs of uneasiness, which indicated to Jack that there was something in the vicinity.

The faithful animals put their noses to the ground, and began sniffing and growling so earnestly that there was no mistaking their anger and excitement. Soon they started off in the direction where the forest was thickest, and our friends made all haste to follow them. Hardly had the



A NARROW ESCAPE.

dogs disappeared when they began to bark, and before the hunters could come up with them their attention was concentrated at the root of a large tree. Examination showed that the tree was hollow, and the earnestness of the dogs was regarded as a sure indication that a bear was concealed in the trunk.

"It is probably his winter-quarters," said Jack. "It is about time for the bears to seek their places of hibernation, and if you had come here a fortnight later you would have had no chance to get one, as they would have been stowed away for their sleep of two or three months. This is your last chance for the season."

The bear was in the tree beyond a reasonable doubt, and now arose the question of "How shall we get him?"

A fire was kindled at the foot of the trunk so that the smoke would



SMOKING A BEAR OUT OF A TREE.

ascend the hollow, and in a few moments it was seen issuing from an opening between the principal branches.

"We'll have him now, sure," exclaimed Jack; "he can't stand that long."

The shot at the bear was offered to the boys, but they both declined

it until they should be more skilful in the use of the rifle. Harry suggested that it would be best for them to see a bear shot by some one else before they attempted the feat, and his opinion was echoed by George. Jack then gave the place of honor to his friend Joe, and the latter stepped forward to watch for the bear.

The smoke rose, increasing every moment, and in a little while the animal crept out and stretched himself along a horizontal limb. He tried to conceal himself, but in vain, as the limb was too small to enable him to hide behind it.

Joe raised his rifle as the bear came fully into view. There was a sharp report, and the bullet evidently went true to its mark. The bear doubled himself in a vain effort to reach the hollow of the tree again, and then fell heavily to the ground. The shot had penetrated his body just back of the fore-shoulder, and in the region of the heart. If he had any life left in him after the shot, he must have had it all knocked out by the force of the fall.

The bear proved to be of medium size, and his coat was thick and glossy though singed in a few places by the fire that had driven him from the tree. Jack and Joe quickly removed his skin and divided the meat, which was slung on poles, and in this way carried to the place where Bill was waiting for them with the lunch.

"We are not so fortunate," said Jack, "as the man who was out once in the New Hampshire woods with a party of friends, and thought they wasted a great deal of strength bringing their game into camp. He vowed that when he went for any he would bring it in alive, and the very next morning he had a chance to do so.

"He went for a stroll before breakfast, and took his gun along on the chance of getting something. A bear that had doubtless been attracted to the camp by the smell of good things around it was in the bushes not far off, and was spied by our friend. He raised his gun and fired, and the effect was to rouse the bear to anger, and bring him upon his assailant.

"The latter came into camp at his best speed, with the bear hanging to his coat-tails. The shot and the subsequent shouts of the scared hunter had roused his friends, and the bear was killed. When he got his breath and was able to speak, he said,

"'I told you I would bring my game in alive, and I've done it.'

"It was admitted all around that he had kept his promise, and they hoped he would do so again. He answered that one experience of the kind was all he wanted, and for the future he would follow the old plan."

While they were at lunch Jack explained to the boys some of the

peculiarities of the bear, and told how hunters took advantage of them in pursuing him.

"One of the remarkable things about him," said Jack, "is his love of order and regularity. When he goes to and from his den to the stream where he drinks, he always follows the same path and puts his feet in the same spots. When he enters a field, crosses a stream, or goes among the bushes where berries grow, he follows the same track, and never



"I BRING MY GAME IN ALIVE!"

varies from it in the least. Consequently, when a hunter knows a bear's path, he is absolutely certain that the animal will come there again and again, provided he does not discover that it has been invaded.

"Hunters conceal themselves near the path of the bear, and shoot him as he is going along and not dreaming of danger. Then they set spring-guns in his way, and arrange them so that the bear will be his own executioner."

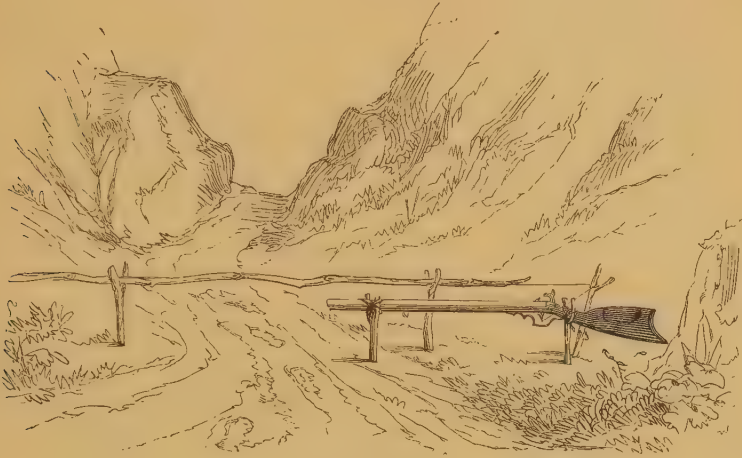
"How do they do that?" one of the boys asked.

"I will explain," Jack replied. "To set a spring-gun requires a great deal of care, and a previous knowledge of the age, sex, and size of the animal to be killed."

"How can they find out all that?"

"By observing the marks where a bear climbs a fence into a cornfield, and by measuring the size of his footprints. Two forked sticks are driven into the ground to support the rifle, so that it will be at right angles across the bear's path, and then some more sticks are arranged for discharging the piece. A bit of grape-vine is generally used for the latter

purpose; it must be high enough to prevent the bear stepping over it, and not large enough to induce him to leap it; in fact, he must push it aside with his nose, and the rifle must be placed so that when the push is made the bullet will be driven into his heart.



A SPRING-GUN.

"The whole thing must be arranged in the afternoon, so that the bear will be killed while taking his evening walk. He comes along his path and sees something lying across it that was not there on his last visit.

"He stops and looks at it. It is nothing but a grape-vine that has fallen there by accident; it is too high to step over, and so small that it is not worth leaping. It can be easily pushed to one side, and so he pushes it.

"The rest of the story tells itself. The natives of North-eastern Siberia have a similar arrangement, in which a powerful bow takes the place of the gun, and an arrow is driven into the bear's side instead of a bullet."

When lunch was ended, Jack suggested that they had best be moving toward home, as the days were short, and if they delayed much longer they might be caught out overnight. The few utensils that had been brought for the use of the party were repacked, and again confided to Bill, together with one of the quarters of bear-meat. Thus laden, the party moved off.

Half-way down the mountain they saw the smoke of a camp-fire, and

on nearing it somebody called to Jack and asked what luck he had had with the bears. Then followed an invitation to stop and partake of a roasted rabbit, an invitation that was declined with the explanation that they had just feasted on the same delicacy. They halted a few minutes with the strangers, who were seated around their fire, and resting after a hard tramp in the forest. Their guns leaned against the trees; one of the men was watching a small stewpan that simmered on the fire, while another was smoking his pipe, and probably wondering how soon the lunch would be ready.

In a little while our friends continued their walk, and as they descended the mountain, Jack explained to his companions that the solemn-looking man over the stewpan was one of the most famous hunters in that part of the country, and had probably killed more bears than any one else.



THE STRANGERS.

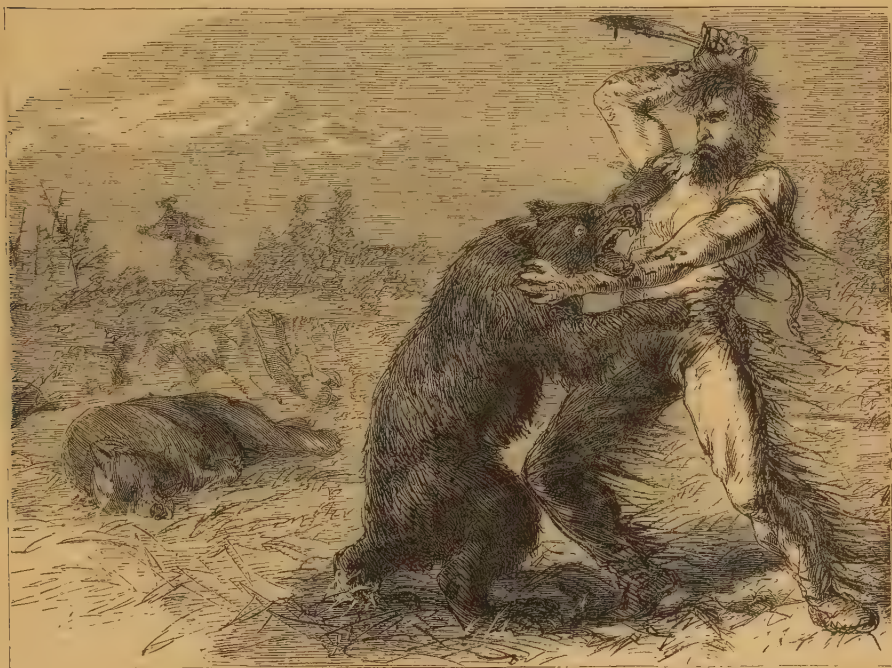
"Did you see the scar beginning on his nose and running downward toward the beard?" Jack asked.

Harry answered that he had noticed it, but George had not gone as near to the fire as Harry, and therefore had not seen the scar.

"Well," continued Jack, "that scar was received in a fight with a bear four or five years ago, about twenty miles from here. Sam—his name is Sam Brown—was out with a friend, when they came upon a couple of bears, and so suddenly that they were not ten yards off when they saw them. One bear was killed at the first shot; the other rifle missed fire, and the bear that was not hurt rushed on the two men.

"They drew their hunting-knives to defend themselves; but Sam's friend did not stay long: he ran over the hill as fast as he could go, and left Sam to fight it out alone.

"He killed the bear, but he had a terrible struggle before he succeeded. His arms and sides were torn and bitten, and his face was scratched where you saw the scar. The mark on his face is nothing compared with those where the other wounds were made, and since that time Sam says he does not want to fight a bear with a hunting-knife unless the bear is dead first."



SAM BROWN'S BEAR-FIGHT.

CHAPTER VII.

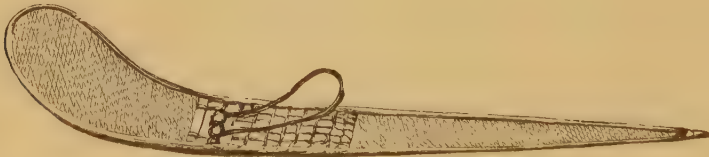
SNOW-SHOES.—MOOSE AND ELK HUNTING.

THE long walk in the mountains, which was an unusual exertion for them, had wearied our young friends so much that they slept late on the following morning, and were not in a condition for renewing their journey in the forest immediately. But in spite of their weariness they were desirous of having a further experience in hunting matters, and their first question on meeting Jack was in relation to the plans for the day. Jack told them they were to do nothing more exciting than stay around the house and look at his hunting implements and trophies; if they tried to do too much at first, they would run the risk of becoming satiated with hunting, and therefore it was the best plan to take matters very quietly in the beginning.

One of the first things to attract their attention, on entering the room where Jack kept his spare articles of the chase, was a pair of snow-shoes.

Harry wanted to try them on, and Jack allowed him to do so. The youth endeavored to fasten them to his feet, but could not, and he wondered how it was possible to keep the shoes in place.

"It doesn't take long to become accustomed to them," said Jack; "and when you have learned how to use them, you will get along very



A SNOW-SHOE.

well. You cannot run rapidly with snow-shoes, but you can travel over the deep snows, when without them you could hardly get along at all."

The boys examined the snow-shoes, and found they were a sort of oval frames about a foot wide in the broadest part, and nearly three feet long,



A HUNTER PURSUING A MOOSE.

coming to a point at the rear end, and slightly turned up in front. Across the open space enclosed by the frame there was a net-work of thongs cut from some tough hide, and there was a light crossbar in the centre, where the foot of the wearer rested.

Harry was puzzled how to fasten the shoes in place. He wanted to tie the rear of his foot down, but there were no thongs for the purpose. After he had tried some minutes, Jack explained the mode of wearing them. He turned to some drawings representing hunting scenes in Canada, and among them found a picture of a hunter following a moose.

"Here," said he, "you can see how the woodsman wears his snowshoes. His feet are incased in moccasins, not in boots such as we have on at present, and he only puts the toe under the thong. He goes along

by a sort of sliding motion, and does not lift the shoe from the snow at all.

"Here is the advantage of wearing snow-shoes in pursuing the moose. The hunter can glide along with ease, but the animal sinks to his sides at every step. He can only wallow along at a very slow pace, and his strength is speedily exhausted, while his pursuer can come upon him as he likes, and take whatever position or distance he chooses. Hunting the moose when there is no snow on the ground requires skill and courage, as the animal is wary and hard to kill; but when the snow is three or four feet deep, the chase is a matter only of endurance, as it requires no bravery whatever."

George asked if everybody in the backwoods of the North was able to walk with snow-shoes.



THE MOOSE.

"If you lived in a region where the snow lies on the ground for four or five months of the year," he continued, "you would soon learn to walk on these things. Ladies in Canada are as accomplished as the men in walking with them, and it is not unusual for them to make pleasure excursions through the snow. I have known surprise parties to be made up for calling on some one. We would meet at an appointed place, and then start off in high spirits for a regular frolic. Occasionally some one would trip and fall, but he would be up in a

moment to be greeted with the laughter of his comrades. When the visit was over, we would have a similar walk home again, and the woods resounded with our shouts and laughter."

The subject of moose-hunting naturally called attention to a pair of antlers that hung over the fireplace in the room where they were. George thought the moose must have a strong neck to carry such a load, and Jack assured him he was quite right, as his neck was very strong.

Harry thought he would like to go on a moose-hunt, and asked if there was any prospect that they could do so.

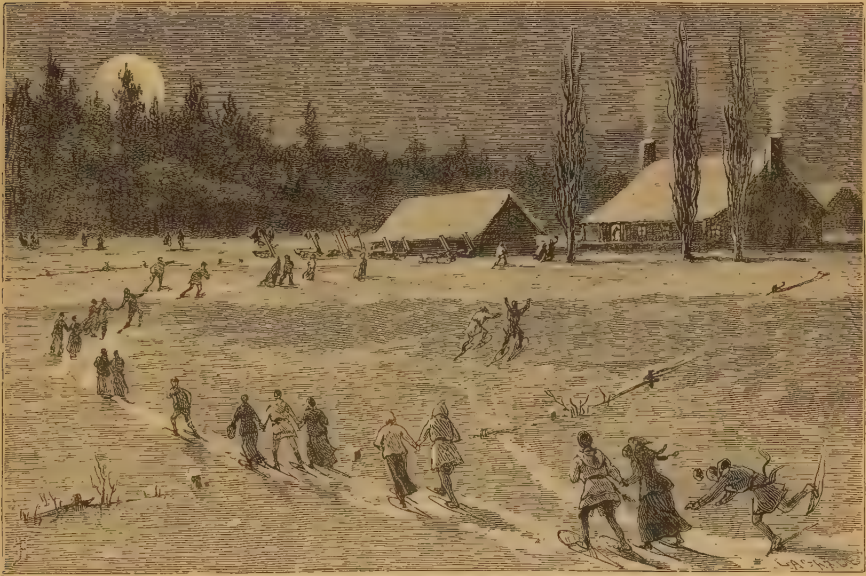
"Not in this region," Jack answered. "The moose is rapidly disappearing from this part of America; very few are killed now in the woods of Maine, and those who wish to be sure of bagging one of these animals must go pretty well away from civilization. In Canada and the British Possessions he still abounds, and he is common enough in the Far West. I have not shot a moose for three or four years, and the one whose antlers you are looking at was shot ten years since, more than fifty miles from this place."

"Did you run him down with snow-shoes?" one of the boys inquired.

"No," was the reply, "I 'called' him."

The boys looked puzzled, while Jack smiled as he proceeded to explain how a moose is "called."

"It is proper to explain that the moose has its season of mating just as the birds have theirs. This usually begins in September and ends late in October, and all through this time the woods resound with the call of



A MOONLIGHT TRAMP.

the animals in search of mates. The man that can imitate the call of the female moose so as to deceive the male can get all the game he wants. They will come from long distances, as far as they can hear the sound, and the great skill in calling is to modulate the sound so that it will bring the moose into close range, and make the shot a certain one.

“The best calls are made with a trumpet of birch-bark. It should be about eighteen inches long, an inch in diameter at one end, and expanding to four or five inches at the other. A hunter can only succeed with it after long practice, as the least false note reveals the deception, and sends



MOOSE-HUNTING IN THE NORTH-WEST.

the moose away to his retreat. The calling can only be done on moonlight nights, as the moose will not pay any attention to it in the daytime, and he is so dark in color that a night when the moon is shining is the only one when he can be seen.

“The males are terrible fighters, and sometimes it happens that a hunter will call two of them at once. On one occasion I was out with a friend of mine, and we had an Indian guide who was famous for his skill in calling. We selected a place by the side of an opening in the forest; my friend and I sat down among the bushes, while the Indian climbed into a tree-top and began calling through his trumpet. The imitation was perfect, and in about half an hour there was a crash in the bushes,



JACK'S FRIEND, THE HUNTER.

and two of the largest bull moose came dashing out of the forest from opposite sides of the clearing.

"As soon as they saw each other they began to paw the earth and bellow in defiance, and after a few moments of this amusement they lowered their heads and rushed to an encounter. They came together with a force that made their great bodies tremble. They were quite evenly matched, and neither was able to gain much advantage over the other, and all their pushing and crowding did no special harm to either of them.

"We let them go on in this way for nearly ten minutes, while we were devising means to kill both of them. The moose is very quick to discover danger by getting the scent of a person, and whenever you approach him you must do so against the wind. It is marvellous to what a distance he can catch the scent: if there is the slightest breeze blowing, he can discover the approach of an enemy for a mile or more, and you will waste your time if you pursue him when he has once ascertained that you are after him.

"We circled round so as to approach against the wind without disturbing the bulls in their fight, and had the satisfaction of getting within twenty yards of them. I took one, and my friend the other, and we fired

so close together that the Indian heard only one report. My friend's moose fell dead with a bullet through his heart, but mine had only his fore-shoulder broken. He gave two or three jumps to get away while I was putting another cartridge in my breech-loader; then I finished him with a shot through the head.

"Both these animals were of the largest size, and the antlers you are looking at came from the one that fell under my bullets. But I haven't told you how large the moose is.

"This animal is the largest of the deer kind in America. He is known to the scientific as *Alce Americanus*, and is gifted with wonderful



EXAMINING TRACKS.

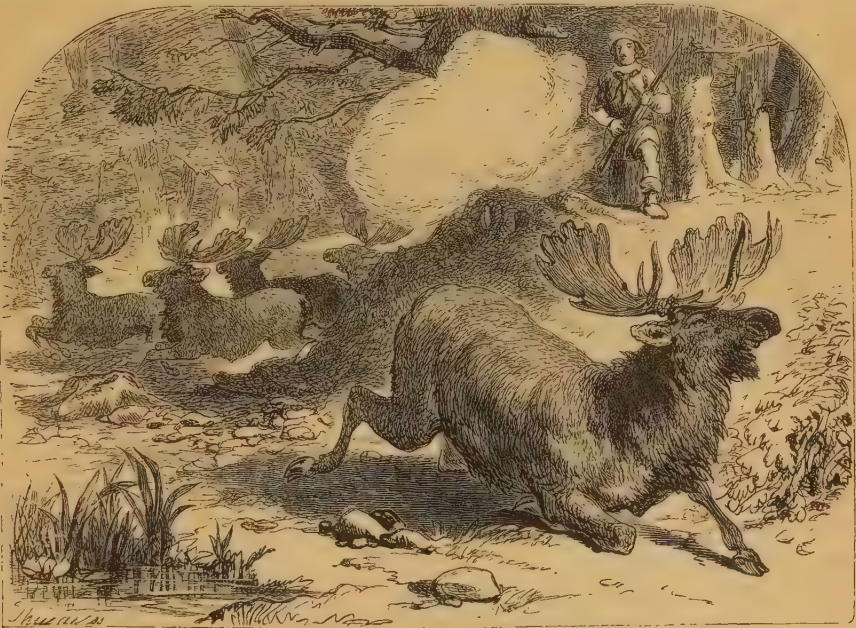
powers of speed and endurance. He is as large as an ordinary horse, being five feet high, and about seven feet from the tip of his nose to the root of his tail, and he weighs from eight to twelve hundred pounds. He is not a handsome beast, and would never be selected as a type of animal beauty by an artist.

"The most remarkable features of the moose are his horns. The male is the only one allowed to wear these ornaments, though once in a great while a horned female moose is killed. The horns sprout when the animal is young, and acquire the length of about an inch during his first year. They require five years for their full development, and the horns

of a large male moose will often weigh from fifty to seventy pounds; those before you weighed sixty-three pounds when I brought them home, and we estimated that the body of the animal would tip the scale at twelve hundred pounds easily. So you can see that it is no small matter to kill a moose when we take his size into consideration; and when you remember that he is one of the wariest beasts in the American forest, you can see further how the hunter can be proud of his capture. To run him down on snow-shoes is not a respectable mode of hunting, as the animal is helpless both for escape or defence, and the hunter is in no more danger than is a butcher when he kills a calf. Calling requires skill and patience, and so does stalking."

Harry asked what was meant by "stalking."

"Stalking, or still-hunting," said Jack, "consists in approaching the animal slowly and silently while he is feeding or otherwise passing his



SHOOTING ON THE RUN.

time in the forest. By following his track you ascertain where he hides, and then you creep up ever so gently till you are within range. You must be careful not to make the least noise; the breaking of the smallest twig, and sometimes the rustling of the leaves and bushes, are enough to

alarm him and send him off on the full run. When he runs he lays his head back, so as to bring his horns on a level with his shoulders, where



AN INDIAN CORRAL.

they will not be in danger of catching on the limbs of trees, and also where they are the least burden to him. He dashes through the forest faster than the most agile man can go, and he even gives the dogs a very lively run.

“When pursued he often takes to the water, and he also goes to ponds and rivers to feed. In the water he can be killed with ease, as his whole attention must be given to swimming, and he cannot fight. On land he is often very dangerous, as he will turn on the hunter and strike terrible blows with his fore-feet. When a hunter is thus attacked, his only mode of safety is by taking shelter behind a tree; and if he is very active, he can manage to keep the tree between himself and the enraged beast.

“In winter the moose forms paths in the forest where he lives, and

by following one of these paths the hunter may come on a 'yard,' as it is called. A moose-yard is simply a place where several of these animals, chiefly females and calves, or yearlings, are gathered to eat the bushes which form their food. They trample the snow to get at these bushes, and when they have consumed all the food in one place they move to another. Frequently a hunter may bag several of them by making his way to one of these yards.

"In the North-west, where game is far more abundant than on the Atlantic coast, the Indians have a way of hunting moose and deer by driving them into a trap. They make a corral or enclosure on a trail where they know the animals will run when pursued, and then they organize a drive by surrounding a large extent of forest, and making a great noise. The frightened animals run in the desired direction and enter the



THE "BUCK-AGUE."

corral, and once in it they become an easy prey. The enclosure is formed of stakes, and between every pair of stakes there is a slip-noose of thongs or cords. The captive endeavors to escape between the stakes, and his

horns become entangled in the slip-nooses. When he is thus caught he may be shot without difficulty, or the hunter may approach him with a knife and slaughter him without wasting powder and ball, which are very costly in those regions."

George thought he would like to go on a moose-hunt, and hoped he would be able to do so before long.

"When you go on your first hunt for moose, deer, or other large game," said Jack, "you won't be likely to bring back much. You will probably have a severe attack of 'buck-ague,' as it is called in the West."

The boys had never heard of this disease, and asked what it was.

"Buck-ague," Jack explained, "is a complaint that affects pretty nearly every man the first time he endeavors to shoot something. He is so excited over the prospect before him that his hand trembles, and he cannot take good aim. I have known a man to have a dozen shots in an afternoon, at very short range, without hitting anything. The first time I ever aimed at a deer, I think he was within twenty yards of the muzzle of my rifle, and almost looking into it, but even then I missed him."

On the wall of the room opposite to where the antlers of the moose were hung, there was another pair of horns that had been the subject of observation on the part of the boys while Jack was telling them about buck-ague and its peculiarities. As soon as he paused George asked from what animal those horns were taken.

"That is a pair of elk horns," said Jack, in reply; "and a very fine pair it is. It is not so large as some I have seen; but you will not often find more symmetrical horns than these."

"Where did you get them?" one of the boys inquired.

"A friend of mine shot the original owner in the Rocky Mountains," Jack responded, "and gave the horns to me. They came here in a huge box, and everybody on the way wondered what could be in such a large package. The elk does not abound on the Atlantic coast, and you must go to the Rocky Mountains or farther west to find him.

"He is next to the moose in size among the deer family, and weighs seven or eight hundred pounds. His horns are often five or six feet long, and I have seen a pair that a tall man could walk under without stooping when the points were rested on the ground. They are prized both for their size and the number of their prongs or points. The largest number I have ever known on a single horn was nine, but much more commonly there are only five or six. Those horns before you have eight prongs each, or sixteen for the pair, and I intend to make a hat-rack of them if I ever have a house where people leave their hats in the hall.

“The elk is not so difficult to hunt as the moose; at least so I am told by those who have pursued him. During the autumn months elks have a habit of calling their mates by a peculiar whistle or snort, and this sound tells the hunter where they are, and leads him directly to their places of



THE AMERICAN ELK.

concealment. It is more difficult to imitate than the note of the moose, and it is very rare indeed to find a person who can make the call of the elk so as to deceive that animal.

“If the male elks meet at this time, they indulge in a short whistling

match, and then in a fight. It is not unusual for them to get their horns so entangled that they cannot separate them, and then both of the combatants die of hunger. When I was first in the West, I was shown a pair of horns that had been found just before in the woods; they were entangled not only so that the first and only wearers of them could not get them apart, but no man in all that region could do so. I tried my hand



CAMP OF INDIAN ELK-HUNTERS.

at it for two hours, and then gave it up. The owner was unwilling to cut them, and finally he placed them in the principal room of his house in the condition in which they were discovered.

“The usual way of hunting the elk is by stalking, and it can be done much more easily than the pursuit of the moose under similar circumstances. The elk does not catch the scent as quickly as the moose, and sometimes a hunter can approach a herd from the leeward, and shoot down half of them, or even more, before they take the alarm. I have heard of a hunter that shot twelve out of twenty-seven in this way, and another that bagged four out of seven. There is an old saying among hunters that if a herd of elk is started they never stop until they have crossed a stream or a lake; but I do not think this statement is strictly

true. My friend who sent me the antlers says he has started a single herd three times in one day; and he knew it was the same because there was one of the animals so peculiarly marked that there was no possibility of mistaking him for another."

"Why don't they train the moose and the elk to work in harness, if they are so powerful?" one of the boys inquired.

"That has been done in several instances," Jack answered, "especially in the case of the elk. He is more easily domesticated than the moose, and is not as difficult to manage; he is very strong, and can draw a heavy load with ease. A friend of mine once had a pair of trotting elks, and they could beat all the horses in the neighborhood."

"How funny!"

"Yes; they were perfectly docile, and trotted off with a long, swinging pace that would send them ahead of the best horses. He had them trained to double harness, and could pass anything that was brought out to compete with them. But they brought him to grief one day, and set everybody to laughing at him."

"How did they happen to do it?"

"They were trotting along very nicely, when all of a sudden they heard the barking of some hounds in pursuit of a rabbit. Away they went over a high fence and into a river, taking the carriage and its contents with them. They broke loose and got to the shore, and the carriage was so knocked to pieces that it was good for nothing afterward. My friend escaped very narrowly, and so did his driver, and the elks ran four or five miles before they were through with their fright and were recaptured.

"My friend inquired about the habits of the elk, and learned that he was accustomed to run when he heard the barking of the hounds. He determined to cure his pair of this habit, and so he put them in a large field with very high fences, and kept dogs barking around them for several days. At first the elks were terribly scared, and ran about the place in great alarm, but finally, when they found they were not hurt, they refused to pay any attention to the barking, and went on feeding as though nothing had happened. In this way they got over their timidity, and when he put them in harness again they minded their own business."

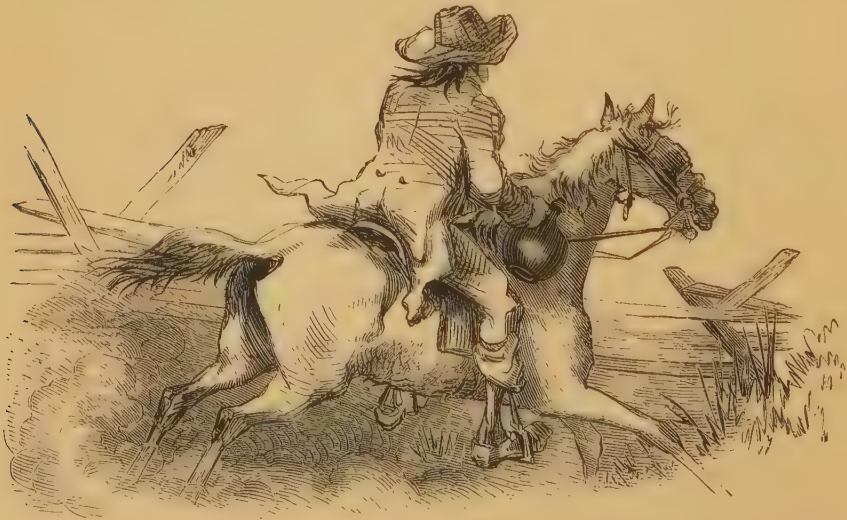
The greater part of the day was passed among Jack's hunting equipments and trophies, and the boys added very materially to their store of knowledge between sunrise and sunset. In the evening they were still fatigued from the effect of the tramp after the bear, and the consequence was that they retired very early.

CHAPTER VIII.

RETURN TO THE RIVER.—LIFE AMONG THE LOGGERS.

THE next morning a messenger arrived with a letter for Joe, which made it necessary for the party to return to the banks of the Kennebec. Accordingly the wagon was made ready, and the youths, with their uncle, bade farewell to their kind host, and were soon on the road by which they had come. The return journey was made quickly, as there was a good deal of down-hill to it, and the wagon dashed merrily along wherever the state of the road permitted.

When Joe arrived at home, it was found that a business emergency would call him away for a week or two, and the Doctor would accompany him. He was one of the parties to a lawsuit relative to the ownership of some land. The case had been in court for several years with no immediate prospect of termination, and the costs had already amounted to something more than the value of the land. Joe thought it made little



JOE'S MESSENGER.

difference who should win the case, as nobody could make much out of it; but he was in for it, and determined to fight to the end, as many a litigant had done before him under similar circumstances.

During the absence of the elders, the boys amused themselves by making daily rounds to Joe's traps, and they had good luck with them, so that they were able to present their uncle with several valuable skins on his return. Then they hunted squirrels, and rabbits, and other small game that abounded there, and one day they accompanied a neighbor on a fox-hunt with dogs. They picked up a fair amount of hunting knowledge; and when Joe came back he pronounced them apt scholars in wood-craft.

"You have got along so well," said he, "that I am going to take you with me into the woods for a fortnight, or perhaps a month. You will find the life somewhat rough, but I know you will enjoy it, and learn a good deal during your absence."

He then explained that the exigencies of his lawsuit required him to go to a lumbermen's camp on the upper waters of the Kennebec, to take some testimony and settle certain questions relative to boundaries. He would start on the following morning, and hoped the boys would not delay his departure.

They answered, almost in the same breath, that they would be ready in half an hour if necessary, or even in less time. They wanted to make the journey to the backwoods, and were willing to go on the instant.

"Spoken like genuine hunters," said Joe. "You are the stuff that Nimrods are made of. To-morrow morning early."

The boys ran to the Doctor, and asked what they should take with them on the proposed journey.

"The less you take, the better," was the Doctor's reply; "you want some rough, warm garments, and plenty of them, and that is all."



"BREAKFAST IS READY!"

"Well, if that is the case," said Harry, "it won't take long to get ready." They thanked the Doctor for his information, and went away to make their preparations. They selected their roughest and thickest clothes, heavy overcoats and blankets, a few materials for writing letters to friends at home, and some spare under-clothing, along with a few books



"PLEASE PASS THE PICKLES."

that they thought would be useful for reading while in the forest, and acceptable to the lumbermen after they were through with them.

Early the next morning they were on the road in Joe's wagon. A ride of four or five miles brought them to the great mail-route, where the stage to the lumber regions made a daily trip each way, halting at a way-side inn for a change of horses, and to allow the passengers time for breakfast.

Just as they entered the hotel, the waiter rung the bell for the morning meal. Our friends had taken a fair breakfast before starting, but their ride through the frosty air had given them keen appetites, and at Joe's suggestion, they sat down at table. "It's a good rule, when you are travelling or hunting," Joe remarked, "to embrace all reasonable opportunities to eat something. You may not be very hungry just now, but the interval to the next eating-place will be a long one; and if you neglect this opportunity you will be half starved before the next one comes."

The regular boarders of the house were mixed up with the stage pas-

sengers in a very miscellaneous way. Directly opposite the seats of our party there was a group of three persons, a lady and two gentlemen, who furnished a good deal of amusement for the boys. The lady claimed to be an invalid, and declared she hadn't appetite enough to eat a canary-bird, but George and Harry made mental notes that she disposed of two mutton-chops, a slice of ham, three eggs, two cups of coffee, and a large piece of toast; and as Joe led the way from the room Harry gave a final



SUMMER LANDSCAPE IN MAINE.

glance at the lady, who was looking languidly toward the gentleman on her left and asking him to pass the pickles.

Breakfast over, the stage drew up in front of the hotel, and in a few minutes the passengers were in their places, and away went the horses.

The day was bright and clear, and the air sharp and bracing. As they rode along, Joe explained to the boys some of the peculiarities of the region they were traversing.

"We are in the season of frost and cold," said he, "and you observe that the trees are bare. In summer this valley is as pretty as you could wish to see a landscape; the open ground is thickly covered with grass, and the forest is a marked contrast to what you see it now. Before we get into the pine forests we shall come to deep snow, and then you will find the landscape very monotonous on account of its unvarying white.



LUMBERMEN PROSPECTING.

"The lumber district, to which we are going, may be said to extend over the whole upper part of Maine. It is one of the chief resources of the Pine-tree State, and may be said to constitute its wealth. Thousands of men are engaged in cutting trees and preparing the lumber for market, and they are scattered all over the State. In the early part of this century the forests extended almost unbroken from the sea-coast to the northern frontier; but so rapidly has the country been cleared by the enterprise of the lumbermen, that you must go pretty well toward the head-

waters of the rivers to find any timber worth cutting. The lumber business is now of less importance than formerly, but it still employs a great deal of capital and great numbers of men.

"While we are on the road I may as well tell you about the business, and then you will have less to learn when we reach our destination.

"In the autumn three or four men go out on a prospecting tour to select a field for their operations. They travel through the forests to examine the timber-land, and sometimes climb to the summits of the hills or the tops of the highest trees, to see as wide an extent of country as they can at once. When they have fixed upon a locality, they buy the land outright at so much an acre, or agree to pay a fixed sum for every thousand feet of lumber they take from it.

"Their next duty is to determine the site of the winter camps, and lay out roads for hauling the logs to the river; then they arrange for the transportation of provisions and supplies, the erection of the necessary buildings for the men and animals, and a dozen other preliminaries. Then comes the force of men with the ox-teams to do the winter work; the roads are made, and, with the first fall of snow, the woods resound with the ringing of the choppers' axes.

"The lumbermen have adopted the principle of division of labor, and the men are divided into 'crews' or working-parties. A crew includes from twenty to thirty men, with a leader or 'boss;' two of them are skilled choppers; there are two barkers and sled-tenders; eight



A CHOPPER AT WORK.

swampers, whose duty is to keep the roads open through the forest ; two sawyers, who cut the logs into proper lengths and mark them, and the rest are teamsters and for other miscellaneous employments. The



WINTER DWELLING OF A CREW OF LOGGERS.

cook comes last in order, but he is generally first, at least in the mind of the logger when coming home from a hard day's work. In old times the men took turns at the cooking, and the bill of fare included very little besides pork and beans, and bread and potatoes, with fried bacon now and then, and the steak of a bear killed in the forest. Of late years regular

cooks are employed, and the loggers have a table that would do very well for a hotel in the city. They have fresh beef, vegetables, preserves, game of various kinds, but they have not by any means given up the old-fashioned pork and beans.

“The foremen of the crews select the trees to be cut down, and they must exercise a great deal of skill and judgment in making their selections, as it often happens that a good-looking tree will be worthless on account of internal rot. There are certain signs that appear only to the initiated, and where a tree is decayed it is best to let it remain standing, rather than have it lying on the ground to impede the progress of the



HAULING LOGS TO THE RIVER.

teams. After the foremen come the choppers, and they speedily bring the forest giants to the ground. A tree may have defied the storms of many years, the lightning and the whirlwind, but it cannot resist the axe of the woodman.

“After the chopper comes the barker, who removes the limbs and bark, and prepares the log for the sleds. Then come the sled-tenders, and the teamsters with their teams. The logs are placed on the sleds



UNLOADING THE SLEDS.

and hauled away to the river, and sometimes the four yokes of oxen find their burden too great, and the teams must be doubled. A free use of whip or goad is often necessary, not to speak of the shouts and wordy encouragements that are liberally bestowed, and are very forcible. The work of the teamster is not free from danger, as a log is liable to swing around in certain conditions of the road and crush him; or it may drive ahead upon him and his team while descending a hill. The choppers are also liable to be killed by the broken limbs and branches thrown through the air when a tree falls, and sometimes while they are at work they will be struck by limbs dislodged by the jar of their axes against the trunk. The great trees fall with a crash that makes the woods resound for a great distance, and is by no means unlike a volley of musketry.

“The logs are unloaded from the sleds at the bank of the river, and they lie there until the ice breaks up in the spring, the water rises, and everything is ready for the ‘the drive.’

“The last trees are cut for the season, the last loads are hauled, and the camp is ready to be broken up. The logs are to be floated down the river to the mills, where they will be cut into lumber, and the lumber



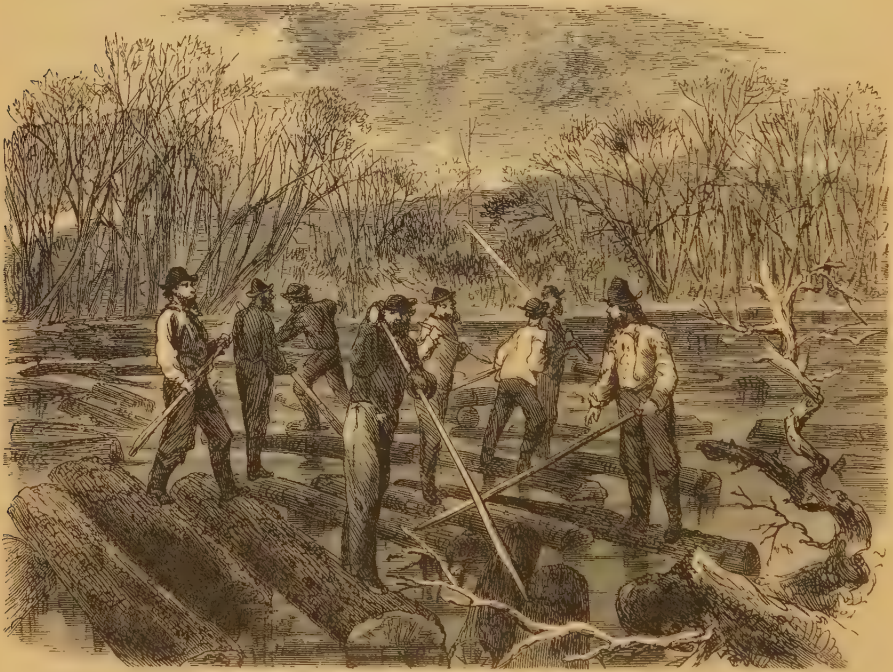
PREPARING FOR THE DRIVE.

loaded into ships to carry it to market. It is very necessary to catch the spring floods at their highest point, as the logs can only be floated when the river is fullest. Consequently the leaders of the loggers are on the watch for the first indications of the melting of the snows, and have all their preparations completed. Oars and poles for managing the logs have been made by the carpenter at his little shanty near the river, and a great number of spare pieces are ordered, to replace those that are sure to be lost in the course of the drive.

"The 'river-drivers' are generally the men who have been at work as cutters, teamsters, loaders, etc., in the forest, and their wages for the drive are increased in consequence of the additional danger involved. They are a rough, jolly lot of fellows, and are much given to fighting as a pastime. When they invade the river towns on their way down in the spring, they make it very lively for the residents, and sometimes do a great deal of damage to property out of pure wantonness. They are powerful in physique, the most of them standing six feet or over in their stockings, and one of their favorite garments is a red flannel shirt worn outside, and tucked into the trousers at the waist. Thus equipped, they

are quite picturesque, and they have the reputation of being as generous as they are quarrelsome, and as brave as they are powerful. They are a class of men peculiar to Maine and other lumber-producing States, and will probably disappear with the extinction of that business, just as the famous boatmen of the Mississippi disappeared after the introduction of steamboats.

"The drivers are very expert at handling the logs while the drive is in progress, and will balance themselves on them with the skill of the champion rider in a circus. They will jump from one log to another with



DRIVERS ON THE RIVER.

the agility of a cat, and preserve their footing with ease, while a green hand would run a strong chance of going into the water. They float along with the logs, and where the river is smooth they follow in boats, which they haul to the shore at meal-times, or when night comes on them. Every drive is accompanied by a cooking-boat, equipped with stove, plates, and other necessary articles of camp life. When meal-time arrives, the cook sets his table on shore and blows his horn, and the men come flocking in from the drive to appease their ravenous appetites. At night the

softest spot on the ground is selected for a bed, and no matter what the weather may be, there is no other sleeping-place offered. Then, too, the most careful and expert of the drivers get an occasional plunge in the icy water of the rivers, and it is no wonder that they are not famous for long lives. They are very vigorous and robust up to about thirty-five or forty years of age; but after that time they are liable to consumption and similar complaints, and are quickly carried off.

"The greatest danger of the rivers is at the falls, where the logs are liable to be jammed, and the river choked with them. The work of breaking a jam is difficult and dangerous, and there can be no delay about performing it, as the result of the season's work depends on its being accomplished before the river falls.

"Sometimes the logs must be removed one by one until the 'key-log,' the one on which the formation of the jam depends, is reached. When



STOPPING FOR DINNER.

this is started the jam is broken up; but the man who starts it has a most perilous position. Sometimes he is suspended by a rope from a tree or cliff, and when he has broken the jam he is hauled up with a rapidity that

often tears his skin and clothing. Sometimes the key-log is cut, while at others it is pried with great levers, or hauled upon with ropes from the shore; but whatever plan is adopted, the work is dangerous for those concerned in it.

"I once knew a river driver who had a great number of narrow escapes, and some of his superstitious comrades thought he bore a charmed



BREAKING A JAM.

life. He was always ready to take the foremost place in breaking a jam, and you can readily believe that no one tried hard to prevent his doing so. Once he was breaking a jam above a fall when it started unexpectedly, and in an instant he was over the fall, in the midst of the surging waters, and among the tumbling logs. His comrades thought he would be drowned in the rushing river, or crushed by the logs—his chance of escape was hardly one in a thousand; and as he disappeared no one expected to see him again. But, to their great surprise, he came out without a scratch, and was soon among them on shore without the least sign of alarm on his face. Nearly every season he passed through some great peril, and he used to quote an old adage that those who were born to be hanged would never be drowned."

One of the boys asked if he verified the correctness of the antiquated saying.

"Assuredly he did," answered Joe. "He became weary of river-driving, and went to California. There he did not prosper in any honest pursuit, and so he 'took to the road;' that is, he became a highwayman. One day he was caught while robbing a stage-coach, and the angry passengers hung him on a tree by the way-side, after a trial that was said to have lasted not more than five minutes. Some of his old companions,



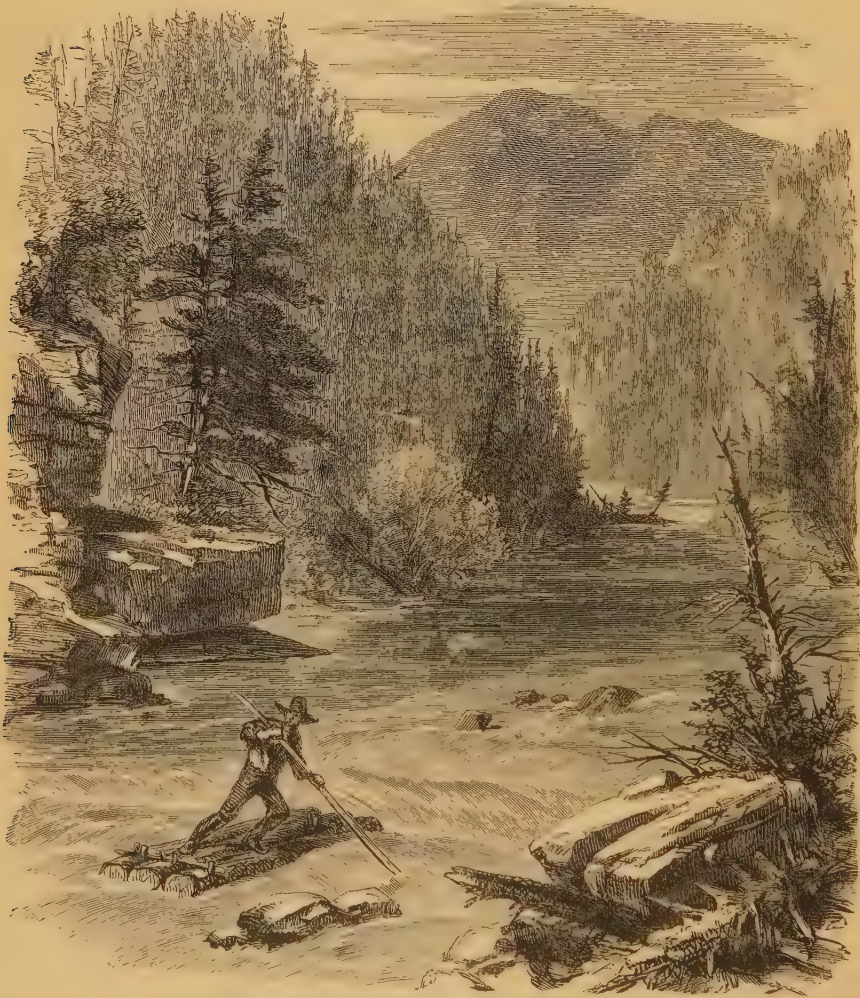
SHIPPING LUMBER.

when they heard of the manner of his death, said he was never drowned on the river, because he was destined to perish in a less honorable way."

"But what becomes of the logs when the river-men get through with them?" Harry inquired.

"They are cut into planks and boards in the saw-mills near tide-water. There are some of the mills that keep as many as a hundred saws in operation, and in the busy season they run them day and night. The lumber is loaded into ships, and sent wherever it is wanted. You have Maine lumber in New York and nearly every other city of the Atlantic coast, and it goes also to foreign countries, though not in great quantities. But

I will not undertake to give you the figures showing the extent of the trade, mainly because I do not happen to have them at hand. Perhaps before you leave the State you may have an opportunity to visit some of the saw-mills, and see for yourselves how the work there is carried on."



THE LAST MAN IN THE SEASON'S DRIVE.

CHAPTER IX.

SCENES IN A LOGGING CAMP.—CHARLEY AND THE CATAMOUNT.

THE stage-coach carried the party toward its destination. The boys observed that every hour as they proceeded the country became more and more wooded, and at length they found the clearings were so rare that the forest was almost unbroken. As they entered the wooded region they found the ground covered with snow to a depth of two, and sometimes three feet. The road was well trodden, and the great sleigh with its four horses went merrily along. They reached the end of the stage-route at a village on the edge of a wide-spreading forest, and from thence their journey was continued by private conveyance.

It was evening when they reached the camp of the loggers, where Joe was to find the witnesses he wanted. They were welcome visitors, as the loggers are generally quite isolated during the winter, and if a stranger happens among them, he is regarded as a bearer of the news of the world. As the boys entered the log-house where the men lived, they found themselves in a room that boasted very few of the adornments of a New York residence. The seats were benches without rests for the back, and the tables were hewn out of logs or made of thick planks. The place was warmed by a stove in one corner, but they were told that stoves were luxuries not often seen in a lumbermen's camp, and most of the cabins were heated by open fires. A kerosene lamp suspended from one of the rafters gave a sufficient light for reading or writing; and as they came into the room one of the men was engaged in the preparation of a letter for the benefit of one of his companions who was unable to write. Another was seated close at hand with his rifle; he was the hunter of the establishment, and had just returned from shooting a moose, which would keep the house in fresh meat for several days.

The rafters were hung with a variety of garments such as the loggers wear; they were put there for the double reason that it was an excellent place for keeping them dry, and there was no other spot for storing them. One rafter was appropriated to stockings, many of them much the worse



EVENING IN CAMP.

for wear. Harry thought, if they were in that condition early in the winter, they would be in a very bad way by the end of the season.

Most of the men in the camp had gone to bed, and others were just going. The sleeping-place of the loggers was an amusing sight to the boys. George said he had heard of things as "thick as three in a bed," but here he found there were not only three but four times that number in one bed together. There were two beds, one on each side of the room, and they consisted simply of long boxes filled with pine-leaves, and covered with blankets. The men lay close together on their sides; so densely were they packed that when one turned over it was necessary for all to turn. Such a method of sleeping would hardly answer for the city, but in the backwoods men are not so particular, and their out-door life

and hard work make the soft side of a pine-board seem more luxurious than does a downy couch to the dyspeptic idler.

The cook, a grizzled Frenchman, had not retired when they arrived, and in a little while there was a supper of pork and beans and bread on the rough table for them to attack. Tea was served in tin cups, as the breakage of crockery in the woods does not make it popular. After supper the question arose to the minds of Harry and George where they should sleep, as they did not discover any place for them in the beds of the loggers, and there was no indication of any extra room. The cook solved the mystery by bringing out some buffalo-ropes and blankets, and spreading them on the floor near the stove. Their overcoats and wraps, added to the articles furnished by the cook, gave them a comfortable outfit for their bed; and as they were greatly fatigued, they slept as soundly as they had ever done in all their lives.

Long before daylight the men were out of their beds, and getting ready for breakfast and subsequent work. As the space in the room was limited, our friends were obliged to rise at the same time as the men, and none of them were long in making their

toilets. The cook set out the table with a huge pot of pork and beans that had been buried in the ashes of the fire in a little shanty at the end that served as kitchen. This is said to be the best way of cooking beans; at least it is the way preferred by lumbermen, many of whom make the bean their chief article of diet. Whether the cooking is done in the open air or in the house, the plan is the same: to cover the pot with hot ashes and let it remain there over-night.

The boys followed some of the men whom they saw carrying axes and saws, as they were desirous of seeing how the work of the logger is performed. They were not long kept in suspense, as it happened that the trees they were engaged upon were only a few hundred yards from the house.

"I see how it is," said Harry, "they cut half through the tree on one



THE END OF THE SEASON.

side, and then on the other. The stump is left nearly level, but the end of the tree when it has fallen is shaped like a wedge."

"Yes, and that's the way they use the saws," George replied. "Two



LUMBERMEN AT WORK.

men stand on opposite sides of a log, and by drawing the saw over it from one side to the other, they soon cut through it."

The boys watched the operation for some time, and then started to go back to camp. Just as they were leaving the spot they heard the clank-



LOADING LOGS.

ing of chains on a log-sled, and soon a team came out of the windings of the road and approached them.

“Let us stay and see how they load the logs on the sleds,” said Harry. “Uncle Joe did not tell us how it was done, and I have been wondering how they lift those great pieces of timber two or three feet through.”

George consented at once, and the boys sat down on a stump to watch the operation.

They found there was comparatively little lifting done by the men in loading the sleds. Some of the logs were cut into lengths of from ten to thirty feet, while others were taken to the bank of the river without being touched with the saw at all. In the former case the logs were piled on the sled, in the latter, the butt-end was attached to the sled, and the

top trailed on the ground. The process of loading was pretty nearly the same in either case.

Two sloping sticks, called skids, were placed against the side of the sled, which was previously drawn up within three or four feet of the log. A chain was then passed under the log, and while one end was carried under the sled, the other passed over it to a yoke of oxen that had been backed into the proper position. Two men with levers in their hands stood on the side of the log, and when all was ready they pried with the levers, while the oxen, guided by their driver, hauled away on the chain. The log rolled or slid upward along the skids, and in a very short time was in its proper place and ready to be bound with the chains.

The full-length logs were each a load for a single team, but the short ones were piled up in numbers varying from three to six. If the former number made a load, there were two logs below and one above; if six were required for a load, the bottom layer contained three, the second two, and the third one. Nearly all the power exerted in preparing a load was supplied by the oxen, the men doing little else than steadying the logs and seeing that they rolled in the right place.



ONE OF THE LOGGERS.

After the chains had been passed around the load they were "bound," so that the logs could not slip. A flexible lever was put in the loose portion of a chain, and then bent backward so that it was drawn as tightly as possible. A short chain held the free end of the lever from going back again, and as long as the chains and lever were in their proper places the load was entirely secure.

The general animation of the scene, the crisp, pure atmosphere, the aromatic odor of the pines, the whiteness of the snow, and the jolly airs of the lumbermen, had a great fascination for the boys. They thought they would like to remain there for the rest of the winter to assist in cutting and hauling logs to the river, and in the spring they would float down the stream with the drive; but when they remembered what had been told them of the rough life on the river, and the disadvantages under which a novice labors, it did not take long for them to conclude they had better return with their uncle Joe.

While they were talking on the subject, there was a shout among the loggers that attracted their attention.

Looking in the direction indicated, the boys saw a deer running among

the trees. They saw him only a moment as he speedily disappeared in the forest. Very naturally the incident turned the conversation to hunting.

After a stroll through the forest where the roads were open, the boys returned to the camp, and found that their uncle had concluded his business, and would be ready to start for another camp as soon as they had taken dinner. The cook was placing it on the table when they arrived, so that they had not long to wait. It was much like the supper of the previous evening and the morning's breakfast, as it consisted mainly of pork and beans. But these delicacies were served cold instead of hot, and consequently the dinner was not quite the same as the other meals.

The horses were brought out from the rough shed that formed the stable of the camp. They were thoroughly refreshed by their rest of the night and half the day, and while the harnessing was going on they champed their bits uneasily, as though in haste to be dashing along the road. When the signal was given they started on a trot, which was soon increased to a run that they kept up for two or three miles; then they gradually slowed down to a trot again, and at this pace the miles were strung behind them very satisfactorily.

A ride of twenty miles brought our friends to their destination. They found a camp not unlike the one they had left, but it was larger, and contained more men. The arrangement of the beds was the same as at the first, but there was no stove in the room. A large fireplace opened at one end of the apartment, and a generous fire was glowing within it. George remarked that the fireplace was far more cheerful than the stove; and Harry added that he thought the ventilation must be much better, as the chimney would give a fine draught. Several men were in front of the fire, in what is known as the "deacon's seat;" some smoking their pipes, and listening to stories



THE CHAMPION STORY-TELLER.

which others were telling; some mending their socks, or putting stitches in garments that had been ripped or torn by contact with the logs their owners had been handling.

The champion story-teller of the party was seated on a stool in front of the rest, and his sallies of wit kept them in roars of laughter. He was a broad-faced Irishman, with a pair of sharp, twinkling eyes that were hardly ever without a smile playing around them. He was busy with the elaboration of his theory of the origin and composition of man, and the ideas he set forth were of a character quite unknown to the scientific world.



PORTRAIT OF THE COMING MAN.

"There's Darwin," said he, "and just think how he makes out that man came from the monkey. I've nothing to do with him; he is no friend of mine, and I never so much as met him in all my life. I never bothered myself about Darwin's theories, but I've got a little theory of my own."

"Well; let's have it," said one of the listeners.

"Why, my theory is that a man is not a man at all, but a composition."

"How do you make that out?"

"Don't you see? Man is made up of the things he lives on. He eats the flesh of numerous animals, and therefore he acquires their attributes. The other animals are distinct in their characters, but the man

has nothing distinctive about him. Every animal has his own peculiar food; some live only on vegetables, like the cow; and some only on flesh, like the tiger; then there are some that live on fish and nothing else, like the otter; and some that eat nothing but birds. But man eats everything that comes to hand, and isn't it fair to call him a composition, and not an original being?"

"According to that," one of his hearers remarked, "you would argue

that when a man takes a breakfast of eggs, bacon, mutton-chop, and fried smelts, he becomes hen, hog, sheep, and fish, in proportion as he has eaten of those articles."

"Or," said another, "when a man eats an oyster, a herring, a broiled chicken, and a beefsteak for dinner, he is mollusk, fish, fowl, and flesh, all at once."

"How would it be," asked a third, "when a man eats bologna-sausage, or a plate of hash, in a cheap restaurant in New York? What would you make him out then?"

The laugh that followed this interrogatory put an end to the arguments on the new theory of the human race. As the laugh died away the notes of a violin were heard, and a song was called for. The late story-teller was for the moment transformed into a vocalist; perhaps he had dined on one of the song-birds of the forest, and the result was proclaiming itself. A few minutes were consumed in arranging the preliminaries and deciding what the tune and song should be, as the player wished to give one thing and the singer another. Finally the matter was adjusted, and, after the owner of the violin had played through a single stave of the air, our argumentative friend struck up with the following song:

"It's little for glory I care;
Ambition is only a fable;
I'd as soon be myself as lord mayor,
With lots of good things on the table.
I like to lie down in the sun,
And dream, while my features are scorchin',
That when I'm too old for more fun
I'll marry a wife with a fortune.

"And in winter with bacon and eggs,
And a place at the fire a-baskin',
Talk with her while I toasted my legs,
And sure there's no more I'd be askin'.
I haven't a genius for work—
'Twas never the gift of the Bradys;
But I'd make a most elegant Turk,
For I'm fond of good living and babies."

The clock struck ten as the song was finished. This was the hour of bedtime, and the festivities of the evening came to an end. Joe and the boys had listened to the argument and the songs, much to their amusement, and Harry remarked that the men must have a good time in the long evenings of winter.

"Certainly they do," said Joe; "there are always some musical char-

acters among them—men who can sing a good song, or play on some instrument—generally the violin; and, as for these mountain fellows, they are rarely at a loss for stories. Some of them are witty and philosophical, like the one with the theory of the character of mankind; but the majority delight in the marvellous, and are never weary of recounting wonderful adventures by flood and field.—Here, Charley,” he said to one of the men, “before you go to bed tell us about your great fight out in Wisconsin with the Indians and the catamount.

Charley paused as the rest of the lumbermen gathered around. They seconded Joe’s request, and so he consented to tell it; but he prefaced it by saying he could not give all the particulars, as it was getting late.

“There ain’t no trees here,” said Charley, “like what we used to have out in Wisconsin. Some of ’em used to take us a whole day to cut through the bark, and it would be a week or two before we got the trunk hacked through so she’d fall. Some of ’em had hollows in ’em so big you could drive a team through without touchin’, and they used to run up sometimes an eighth of a mile high. Bill Jones said he had seen one that was a quarter of a mile long and a hundred feet through at the butt; but I always thought he was lyin’, as it ain’t reasonable to talk about such a tree as that.

“One day when Bill and me was lumberin’, a hollow tree fell across our path where we was goin’ along with a big log on the sled, and what do you think we did?”

Of course no one could guess.

“Well, Bill just up and drove the team right through that ere log—team, log, and all went through without touching. I never would ’a’ believed it if I hadn’t seen it myself.

“We found the log so large that we thought we’d use it for a house the next year, and when we came back again we went to it. It was just night when we got there, and we went to work to get supper. Bill was stirring the tea just outside the door, when all at once there cum a big catamount right down on his back. Bill gave an awful yell, but he hung on to the teapot, and dashed the hot tea into the critter’s face.

“You never seen a wild-cat more confused and obfuscated in all your life. The hair peeled off from the front part of his head till he was as bald as a punkin, and his eyes was shut up tight as a patent window. He let Bill alone, and begun pitchin’ round generally, and he got hold o’ me and give me a lively scratchin’. But I managed to tie his hind legs together, and just as I was reachin’ for his forrard ones, I heard a yell that was enough to split the ears of a cast-iron mule.

"I knew at once it was Injuns, and Bill yelled out 'Injuns!' and made for the inside of the big tree. I backed into the log after him, and took the cat along with me, as I had an idea he'd be useful to us. There was six of them Injuns, and they stopped and had a little palaver to know what to do next.

"Evidently they hadn't seen the cat when I dragged it in, or if they did they didn't suspect what it was.

"One of the Injuns took a stand at one end of the log, and the other five run round to drive us out. As soon as I saw what they was doin' I tied a bunch of dry grass to the cat's tail, and when I saw their five heads forenenst the end, I just cut the strings that was round the cat's feet, and at the same instant touched a match to the bunch of grass.

"You ought to 'a' seen her go! A shootin'-star isn't a comparison, and a cannon-ball's more like it. She went plump among them Injuns, and in less time than I've been tellin' it she had chawed one of 'em into pieces as fine as boardin'-house hash. I wouldn't 'a' believed it if I hadn't seen it myself.

"Another of 'em dropped with a bullet from my rifle, and the one that was watching at Bill's end, he had the same fate. The rest went through the bushes like scared rabbits, and that was the last we seen of 'em. Good-night, boys."

CHAPTER X.

A YACHTING EXPERIENCE.—FROM NEW YORK TO GREAT SOUTH BAY.

THE next day was passed in the camp among scenes similar to those already described. Joe completed his business, and announced to the boys that they would be off by daybreak of the following morning. He was as good as his word, and before the sun rose above the horizon they were dashing along the road.



A YACHTSMAN AT HOME.

In due time they reached home, and were welcomed by the Doctor, who had been attending to the traps during their absence. A few days after their return the boys received letters that brought their sojourn in Maine to an end, and called them back to the city. The Doctor accompanied them on their journey, which was made without any incident worth recording. They returned to their studies at school with faces reddened and browned by their exposure to the pure atmosphere of the country, and with a vigorous health that made them the envy of some of their companions. Their school-mates looked on them as heroes; and they were never weary of telling their hunting experiences on the banks of the Kennebec, and their journey to the camp of the loggers.

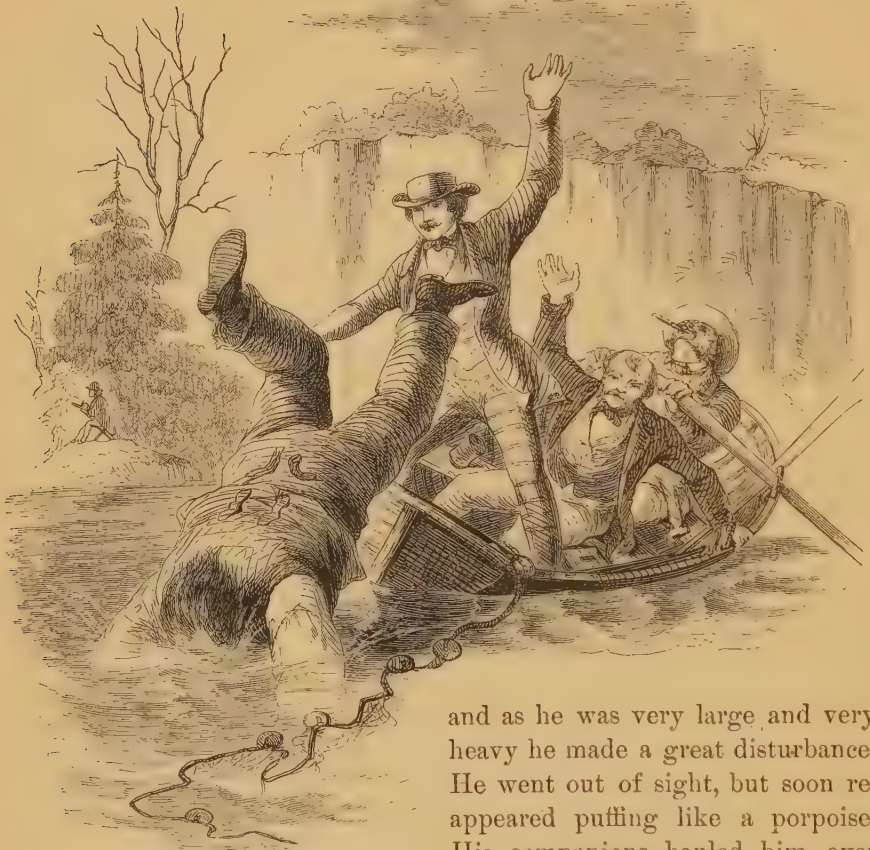
They made good use of their time, and when the summer vacation came the Doctor said he had a new treat in store for them as a reward for their diligence. He had arranged for a short cruise in a yacht along the coast, which would give them an opportunity to try their hands at fishing, as they had already tried them at hunting.

"Be ready to start to-morrow morning," said the Doctor. "You don't need much preparation, as everything we want is on board the yacht except your personal baggage. Take your oldest and roughest clothes—and you may as well take two or three suits, in order to have a change in case you get wet. Two or three yachting shirts of woollen material and dark in color will be necessary, and a good suit of clothes with white shirts, for going on shore. You would do well to take some extra shoes along, as you will want to change occasionally when the weather is rough. A large valise will hold everything you need for the voyage, which will not be a long one."

The boys acted on the suggestion, and long before night they had their baggage ready.

They were up early in the morning; and as the Doctor was quite ready, they made an excellent start. The yacht that was to carry them was lying at anchor in the Hudson River, and they drove straight to the landing that was nearest, and hired a skiff to take them to their craft. They were treated to an amusing incident as they neared her, and both the boys laughed heartily over it, as soon as they found that the victim of the occurrence was unharmed.

They passed a skiff whose occupants were amusing themselves by hauling a seine in the hope of taking some fish. They did not appear to be skilled either in handling the boat or manipulating the seine, and just as our friends passed there was a loud splash in the water. The man who was reeling out the seine had lost his balance and tumbled over;



"A MAN OVERBOARD!"

and as he was very large and very heavy he made a great disturbance. He went out of sight, but soon reappeared puffing like a porpoise. His companions hauled him over the gunwale without much ceremony, and the work of seining fish

was abandoned for that of drying and reviving the fisherman.

When the skiff reached the side of the yacht the boys jumped lightly to the deck, while the Doctor followed at a more dignified pace. It took but a moment to hand up the valises, and to pay the boatman and send him away. As everything was ready, the yacht was soon making her way down the harbor in the direction of the ocean. The boys scrutinized every part of the little craft, and in less than an hour there was not a bolt, a rope, a plank, or the head of a nail even, that had not come under their observation. Their first investigation was directed to her name and peculiarity of construction, and they kept up a running fire of questions on the amiable Doctor, till their minds were stored with a liberal amount of yachting knowledge.

"She isn't a large craft," said the Doctor, "as you can readily perceive. She is what we call a centre-board sloop, and her name is *Lotos*. The *lotos* is a species of water-lily; and as the home of this yacht is on the water, we thought it was not a bad name for her."

"The water-lily stays in one place," George observed, "and that is not what is expected of a yacht. It is to be hoped she can sail a great deal better than the flower she is named for."

"I know what a sloop is," said Harry; "it is a vessel with one mast, while a schooner has two. But I don't know what you mean by 'centre-board.' It is a term I never heard before."

"Can you tell me what a keel is?" the Doctor asked.

"Certainly," was the reply; "the keel is the principal timber in a ship, and extends along the middle of the bottom from bow to stern."

"Except in flat-bottomed ships that have no keels," interrupted George.

"Quite right, both of you," the Doctor responded. "Now, the keel is of great assistance in steering a ship, as it prevents her falling off, or sliding to one side, when the wind is blowing against her beam. And the centre-board is a substitute for a keel, or rather, it is a device by which a boat may have a keel when she needs one, and be relieved of it when it is not wanted."

"How is that?"

"A strong plank is arranged in the middle of the boat so that it can be raised or lowered at will. It goes directly through the bottom where the keel would be if she had one, and by means of a block and pulley it can be managed with the greatest ease."

Then the Doctor exhibited the arrangement of the centre-board to his young companions, and afterward they went below to examine the interior of the boat. The case that enclosed the centre-board rose through the middle of the cabin; on each side of this casing there was a leaf of a table, that could be raised when dinner-time arrived, and when not wanted it could hang in its place as any well-behaved table should do. There were two rooms, each accommodating one person, and the sofas in the cabin would furnish comfortable sleeping-quarters for two more. The steward had a pantry where all the table-ware was kept, and there was a neat little kitchen or galley beyond it, where the cooking for the party was done. The captain and his crew of four men were quartered in the bows of the yacht, and while there was room enough for everybody and everything, there was not a cubic inch of space allowed to go to waste.

They had taken a very light breakfast before starting from home, and

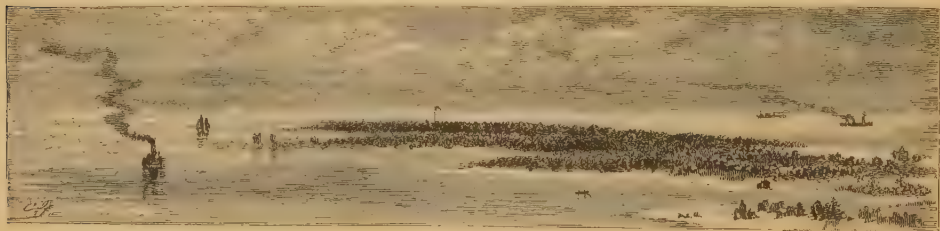
were not at all sorry to see that the steward was getting the table ready while the *Lotos* was making her way down the harbor. The Doctor warned them that they might be disturbed by the sea, but said it was a good rule not to borrow trouble in advance, and if their appetites were favorable, they had better partake of what had been set out.

They were hungry beyond a doubt, if we may judge by the vigorous attack they made on the cutlets and other things on the table. The steward smiled as he looked at the youths, and thought how soon all those edibles would be thrown over the side, and the boys twisted with the agonies of sea-sickness. He was doomed to be disappointed, as they maintained their condition, and were not disturbed in the least. The Doctor said he had thought all along they would be good sailors, and the result showed the correctness of his theories.



THE STEWARD.

They passed Sandy Hook, the low point of land that marks the entrance of New York Bay, and is both a delight and a fear to the mariner who approaches the Commercial Metropolis of the United States. Long before they reached it the boat had begun to rise and fall with the waves, and now she tossed gracefully, as though conscious of her ability to carry her passengers and crew in safety wherever they might wish to go. The day was delightful, the air being of a temperature that was neither too warm nor too cool for comfort, while the breeze was just enough to carry the *Lotos* at an easy pace, without dashing the water over the bows, or otherwise making things uncomfortable for the young landmen.



SANDY HOOK.

Outside the Hook they met a large steamer going in, and a few minutes later another passed them on her way to Europe. Half a dozen sailing ships were in sight at once, some with all their sails spread to the breeze, while others had only canvas enough set to keep them in motion. There were many fishing and pleasure boats darting here and there, and the *Lotos* went within a few yards of one on which a party was endeavoring to have a good time and catch some blue-fish. They were sailing along at a fine rate, and had several lines trailing over the stern of their craft. George thought they were too closely packed for comfort, as there were eight or nine of them, besides the man at the helm. Three women were of the party; two were not feeling particularly well, and wanted to go home, but the third was fishing away as merrily as the best of the men, and enjoying the fun.

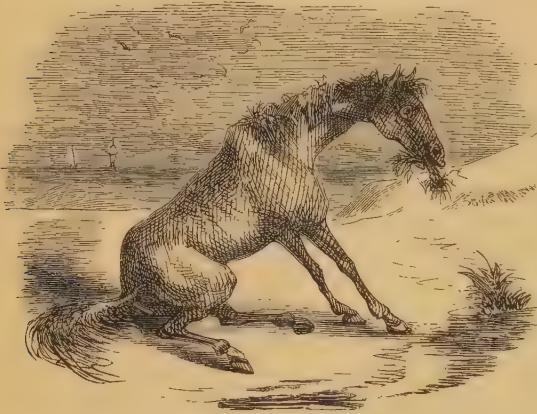


A PLEASURE-PARTY ON THE WATER.

"We shall have some practical acquaintance with blue-fishing," said the Doctor, "and then I will tell you about it."

The Doctor had previously instructed the skipper of the *Lotos* as to the first port he desired to visit, leaving it to that worthy to shape his

course as he thought best. When they were fairly out at sea the yacht was headed to the eastward, passing Coney Island and Rockaway, and steering for the entrance of Great South Bay. It was a run of about thirty miles, and in a little less than four hours they were entering the



FIRE ISLAND PASTURE.

bay, and then the boys found out some of the uses of a centre-board. The water at the entrance of Great South Bay is quite shallow, except at high tide, and when the *Lotos* passed the bar it was necessary to draw up the centre-board to prevent its scraping on the sand. Harry remarked that they could not have served a keel in the same way; and the skipper said

that if they had had a keel instead of a centre-board, they would have been compelled to wait some hours for the tide.

Great South Bay is a pretty sheet of water on the side of Long Island nearest the ocean. It lies between Long Island and a strip of sand that answers the geographical definition of an island, as it is surrounded by water. It has a length of thirty miles, and a width that averages not more than half a mile, while the vegetation is very scanty indeed. The principal and only practicable entrance is the one by which our friends found their way into the bay, and it is known to the fishermen and others as Fire Island Inlet. A fashionable hotel stands on the sandy stretch near the inlet, and hundreds of people go there from New York every summer to inhale the cool breezes of the Atlantic. The great majority of the summer visitors designate the hotel as the "Fire Island House," and the beach as Fire Island. The name properly belongs to a small island in the bay, and tradition says the early inhabitants were accustomed to display their enterprise by building fires there, so as to lure ships to their destruction. They had a bad reputation as wreckers in the early part of this century; and another tradition is that when they saw a ship dangerously near the land near the close of day, they set their wits to work to make sure that she came ashore. They fastened a lantern to a horse's neck, and led him along the beach; and thus the up-and-down

motion was easily mistaken for the light of another ship, and deceived the mariners into shaping their course so as to bring them on the sands. The natives made a good thing out of the business, but it came to an end when the Government made a careful survey of the coast, and established light-houses wherever they were needed.

The natives of the region bordering on Great South Bay at the present time are a peaceful and for the most part a law-abiding race, and the luring of ships on shore by false lights is no longer practised. They earn a comfortable living by catching fish for the New York market, and attending to the wants of the hundreds and thousands of men and women who go to South Bay in summer to escape the heat and fever of the great city. Hotels, villas, and boarding-houses are numerous all along from the eastern to the western end of the bay, and every year the region is becoming more and more popular. On pleasant days in summer the bay is dotted and stippled with dozens and dozens of sail-boats and yachts, whose white wings stand out in sharp contrast to the dark waters beneath



ENTERPRISE.

them. Once the bay abounded in fish, and the old inhabitants have marvellous stories to tell of the hauls that were made in days of long ago.

The skipper of the *Lotos* was a native of Suffolk County, which bor-

ders on the bay, and as they sailed up the channel he told the boys how they used to catch fish there when he was a boy.

"I remember," said he, "my father took me out one afternoon to show me how to make myself useful on a boat. We sailed up and down the channel, right in front of where the Olympic Club is now, and in an hour's time we took thirty-seven as fine blue-fish as you'd wish to see."

"Can't we catch some there now?" Harry inquired. "I should like so much to take a blue-fish!"

"We might troll for them a week without catching one. The only way we can get any fish in the bay now is by 'chumming' for them."

George asked what was meant by "chumming," and the skipper explained that it was a mode of feeding the fish, and attracting them to the vicinity of a boat. "You take a lot of moss-bunkers," said he, "and chop them into little pieces. You keep a small stream of this 'chum' going over the side of the boat, and it floats off with the tide. The fish strike the trail, and follow it up; and then they bite at the hooks that are baited with slices of moss-bunkers—the same as the chum is made of. The moss-bunker is a very oily fish, and makes splendid bait; its other name is manhaden, and it belongs to the herring



AN ANCIENT INHABITANT.

family and genus *Alosa*. Millions of these fish are caught every year. The oil is removed by pressing and boiling, and the refuse, after the oil has been extracted, is used for fertilizing land. Great quantities of the fish are spread on the lands along the coast for manure, and the stench that arises from them is something abominable."

The skipper could not find language strong enough for a satisfactory denunciation of the folly of his old neighbors in neglecting their own interests. "They pay no attention to the law," said he, "that forbids

fishing at certain times and in certain ways. The sole object of the enactment is to protect the fish, and keep the supply good. Many of the people understand it, and want to see the laws enforced, but they are overawed by a minority of the fishermen, who sweep the channel with



ON THE BEACH.

drag-nets, erect pounds or pens, where the fish are entrapped, and do other things to drive away and destroy nearly everything that comes into the bay. A few years ago the blue-fish got to coming in here for the chum that was fed over from the boats, and there was good fun. A great many gentlemen came down from New York, and spent lots of money for moss-bunkers and hiring boats, and the fishermen were making a good thing out of it. I've seen fifty boats out in the channel at one time, and every one of those boats was hired by somebody at a good price; but, as soon as the fish got to running well, the lawless fellows went to sweeping the channel with nets, and the whole thing was spoiled. Gentlemen quit coming because they did not care to spend money and have no fun in return, and then the boatmen complained they had no patronage, and times were hard. It was their own fault; I've told them so a dozen times, but they don't seem to understand it."

"I would suggest," remarked the Doctor, "that the remedy is quite in their own hands. You say there are proper laws for the protection of the fish, but they are not observed."

"Exactly so," was the skipper's reply. "Many of the men believe in the laws and obey them, but there are some, quite a minority, that do not. They are the ones that catch the fish in illegal ways, and ruin the business."

"Precisely," responded the Doctor. "Now, let the law-abiding men in each village form an association to compel the enforcement of the laws. They know perfectly well the names of the violators, and can report them to the proper officials; and every case should be reported at once, without fear or favor, and the proper punishment demanded. A little justice would bring the rascals to their senses, and make them law-abiding citizens. Concert of action will do wonders in a great many things, and there is an excellent opportunity to make use of it here."

The *Lotos* sailed up the channel of the bay about six miles, and came to anchor in front of the grounds of the Olympic Club. The yacht of the club and several smaller boats were lying there as if to welcome her; and as she approached the anchorage a flag was run to the top of a tall staff near the water's edge. A small skiff came out from the club's dock at the mouth of a narrow creek, and the Doctor was soon shaking hands with the rotund "commodore," who filled the office of president of the



SUMMER SCENE NEAR SOUTH BAY.

Olympic. The party went on shore, and was welcomed by several members of the association. They were shown through the buildings of the club, and expressed their admiration for the general arrangements of the establishment. Harry made note of the fact that the club had a dining-room and a billiard-room under one roof; besides a three-story building

with parlor and sleeping-rooms, and three other buildings divided into rooms that were the private property of members. And he also observed that the club made its own gas, possessed a large ice-house, and that the grounds comprised nearly twenty acres of land, carefully laid out into gardens and lawn. He thought the club men ought to have a comfortable time there, and his opinion was strengthened when he looked around and saw the rounded figures and ruddy faces of the gentlemen who wore the dark-blue uniform with its gilt buttons bearing the initials of the association.

"The club was started nearly forty years ago," said one of the members, "and times have changed with us a good deal. The first year we lived under a tent made of the sail of a boat stretched over a pole, and we did our cooking in the open air; we had no servants, as we couldn't afford such a luxury; and when the supply of clams and fish gave out we generally went hungry. The first Olympic was vastly different from this, but we had lots of fun there, in spite of our rough work and plain fare."



THE FIRST OLYMPIC.

CHAPTER XI.

FISHING INCIDENTS IN GREAT SOUTH BAY.—CATCHING A SHARK.

THEY spent an hour or two in the inspection of the premises of the Olympic, and in pleasant conversation with the gentlemen to whom the youths had been introduced. Harry was of an inquiring turn of mind, and had various questions to ask, and George was not far behind him in making interrogatories. One of the queries related to the occupations of the gentlemen during their stay at the club. The commodore said this was a difficult question to answer, but he would do his best to make it plain.

“Some of the members,” said he, “are fond of sailing, but don’t care about catching fish; then there are some that like fishing, but are not



TAKING IT EASY.

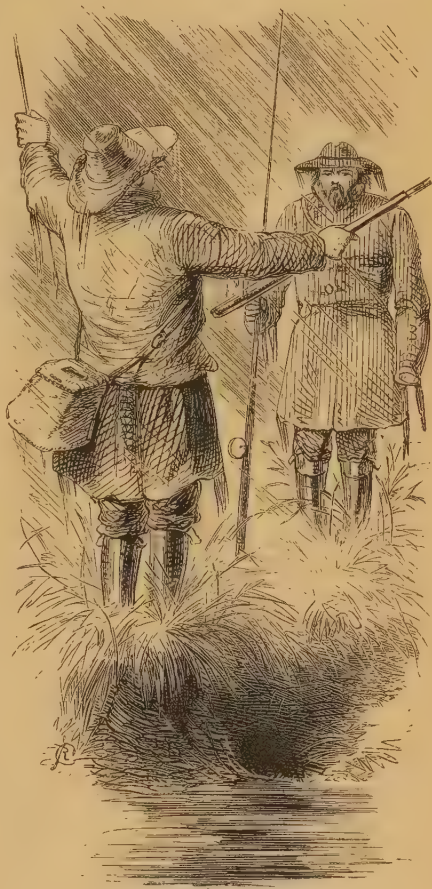
enthusiastic sailors. The result is, they divide up the club's yacht and boats between them, and go out on different days. There are several that never venture on the water, although they wear the uniform of yachtsmen; and there are some that would like to be on the water all the time, and more too. One gentleman likes to catch blue-fish, and despises anything less active, while another says that a clam or an oyster is as lively a game-fish as he wishes to tackle. One member lies in a hammock all day, and would stay there all night if the mosquitoes would let him alone; and another thinks there is nothing equal to lying on the ground and smoking his pipe, while he keeps the flies away with a handful of grass. There he is now," said the commodore, pointing to the subject of his conversation, who was evidently enjoying himself, and caring very little what they said about him. "He has been there two hours to my certain knowledge, and nothing but the gong for dinner will bring him to a standing position."

"Perhaps a snake might do it," the Doctor suggested.

"Yes, perhaps," was the reply; "but we don't keep snakes here, or at any rate we do not encourage them to stay around the premises."

Further conversation on the subject developed the fact that the Olympians were in the habit of amusing themselves in any way they liked, as long as they did not interfere with any one else. The younger ones had more taste for the water than their elders, and went frequently on fishing and sailing excursions. The pure air of the sea, and the facilities for doing nothing, were the attractions of the place, and everybody did his best to enjoy them.

The party spent the night on shore, and the next morning it was pro-



AN OLYMPIAN AMUSEMENT.

posed to "give the blue-fish a shake up." The *Lotos* was left at her moorings, and the Doctor and the boys embarked on a "cat-boat" that was loaned to them by one of the members of the club. The boys wondered why they did not go in the *Lotos*, and the Doctor explained that she was much too large for the wants of a blue-fishing party, and, besides, the business was not altogether cleanly, and they did not wish to soil the decks of the yacht.

"Why do they call it a cat-boat?" Harry asked.

"We must refer that question to the boatman," said the Doctor, as he turned to the man at the tiller. "Why do you call this a cat-boat?"

"Because that's the name of it," was the ready answer. "I don't know any other reason. They were always called cat-boats as long as I could remember, and nobody ever told me why."

"I never met any one yet who could tell me where the name came from," the Doctor continued, turning toward Harry, "and I have asked the question a hundred times."

"The name refers to the rig of the boat," said the man at the tiller. "You see that the mast of a cat-boat is stepped very far forward, almost in the very bows of her. She has no jib at all, and so she is very easy to handle. When she goes about, all you have to do is to turn the tiller and the thing is done. You have no jib to carry over, and she falls into the wind with the greatest ease."

"It is an easy thing to handle," responded the Doctor, "but it has a greater tendency to capsize than some other boats."

"That's true," the skipper answered; "but any craft is dangerous in the hands of an incompetent person. There are two or three rules for sailing a cat-boat, and if you stick to them you will find her as safe as anything that floats."

"What are they?"

"'Luff her when she breezes,' is one of 'em; and 'have your peak hal-yards always where you can reach 'em,' is another. A man who knows how to sail a cat-boat will never let go the main sheet when a squall comes, but that is the very thing a greenhorn does, and it's almost certain to send her over. Nine times out of ten when a boat is capsized it is because the man at the tiller wasn't paying proper attention to her, or did the wrong thing when the gust struck him."

Harry said he presumed the explanation was all right, but he did not know the meaning of the terms used by the skipper.

The Doctor explained that "luffing" meant bringing the head of the boat round so that it pointed into the wind, and made the sail present a

smaller angle to the breeze than when it was blowing directly against the beam or side. The mainsheet was the rope that controlled the boom, or lower stick, to which the sail was fastened; and the peak halyards were the rope or ropes that managed the upper stick, or "gaff."

"Look out for your heads!" said the skipper; "we're going about now."

The three pleasure-seekers "ducked" their heads as the boat came around into the

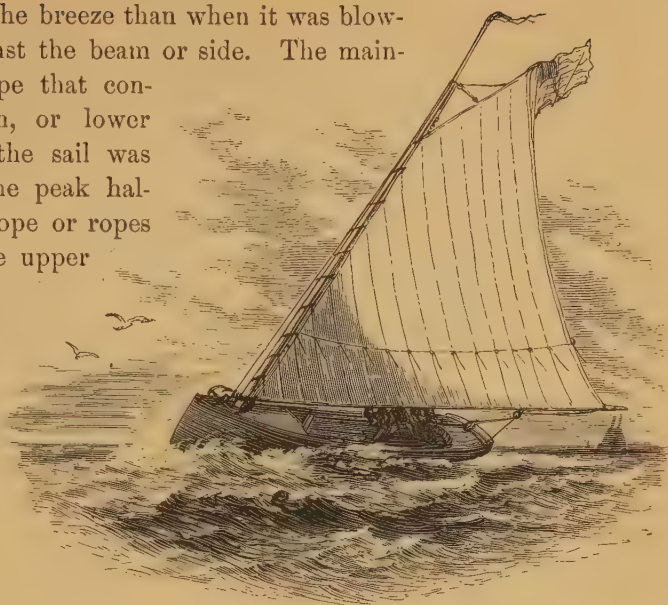
wind. The boom swung over, and took its place on the side opposite to where it had been a few moments before. The boat had leaned over to the right, but now she was leaning to the left, and compelled the passengers to change their seats.

"We have 'gone about' or 'tacked,'" said the Doctor. "The operation of going about is called 'jibing' by the boatmen along the coast."

"What are those boats doing out there?" George asked, as he pointed to a group at anchor in the bay.

"Them's clammers," said the skipper. "They're raking clams for a living."

"Great South Bay," said the Doctor, "is a favorite ground for clams. They were once found here in numbers apparently inexhaustible, and hundreds of men made a living by raking for clams to sell in the New York market. The whole bottom of the bay seemed to be paved with them, and in some places the beds appeared to be several inches thick. But the business was overdone in the same way that the fishing was spoiled. A lot of men, who neither thought nor cared for the future, raked the bay clean from one end to the other: they lived in their boats and stuck to the business, selling all their clams, large and small, for any price they could get. In consequence of their folly, they have been driv-



THE CAT-BOAT.

en into other pursuits, as the work of clamming is not at all profitable now, even for the smaller number of men engaged in it. It barely makes a living for the clammers, and nothing more. The clams from this bay are considered the finest on the coast, at least by those who live in this part of Long Island."

The Doctor intimated to the skipper that they would like a few clams to taste, and so the latter passed near a skiff on the clam-grounds and hailed its occupant. The cat-boat swung into the wind and stopped, and the skiff dropped along-side; a bucketful of clams was speedily obtained and paid for, and then the cat-boat stood away on its course down the bay.

During the brief halt among the clammers, the boys observed that the operators were provided with curious rakes with very long handles. The teeth of the rake were curved into a half-circle, and were close enough together to retain the clams, while they allowed the mud and sand to strain through. The rake was thrown from the boat as far as possible by means of the handle, and then by a comical, wiggling motion the holder gradually brought it to a perpendicular position. Then it was lifted to the deck of the boat; whatever clams it contained were emptied out, and then the process of raking was renewed. George thought the life of a clammer must be rather monotonous, as the capture of the bivalve did not require any particular courage or skill; but the skipper told him that clams had been known to fight vigorously for their rights, and he showed a large scar on his arm, which he averred was made by a South Bay clam several years before.

"I got that scar," said he, "over by Dave Sammis's hotel one morning in October. The house was closed for the season, and I was helping Dave fix things up for winter. The clams used to come around for the scraps that the cooks threw out from the kitchen, and as long as business was good and there was plenty to eat they didn't make no trouble. After the house shut up there wasn't any more scraps, and they grew as ravenous as they say wolves do in countries where the game gets buried up in the snow, and the wolves can't find it. Sometimes they gnaw off the posts under the house, and I suppose it must cost Dave a hundred dollars every year for the posts the clams chew off.

"That morning it was cold and frosty, and more than five hundred great bull clams was round the house, making a great noise with their roaring and fighting. They'd chase each other up and down along the sand, and I tell you when a clam sets out to run, and starts in dead earnest, there's no stopping him. One of 'em was gnawing away at the post



under the bar-room, and I told Dave I'd go down and drive him off. Dave told me to be careful, but I thought there wasn't any danger, and so down I went.

"Well, gentlemen, that clam ran, but he ran for me, instead of going the other way. Before I knew what he was about, he clinched me by the arm, and we had it tough for three or four minutes. I might have got the worst of it if Dave hadn't come down with an ax and settled the fellow. If you don't believe what I say, you can ask Dave Sammis, and he'll tell you all about it. I tell you, gentlemen, life on South Bay is a serious matter, what with clamming, and sharking, and the other dangers."

"Do they have sharks here?" said one of the boys. "I supposed that sharks were only found in warmer waters than this."

"Certainly," answered the boatman, "there's lots of sharks in South Bay, but they are not the kind that eat people. Nobody was ever eaten up by any of the sharks round here, but I've heard of men being bit by 'em when they were in swimming."

"The story of the fighting clam," said the Doctor, "is open to suspicion, but the shark does abound here, and I have had the pleasure of catching him. There's one now," he continued, as he pointed to a boat a short distance away, where a couple of men were having a lively time with a



CLAMMING IN GREAT SOUTH BAY.

large fish, which the boatman was vigorously pounding with an oar in order to quiet him.

"That's a shark, sure enough," said the skipper of the cat-boat. "We'll sail by and have a good look at him."

Suiting the action to the word, he steered the cat-boat so as to pass close to the shark-fishers. The latter were evidently unaccustomed to the strange fish they had hooked, and were chiefly occupied in keeping out of his way, and kicking at him with their boots. The shark was a slender fish, about five feet long, with a gray back and white belly, and a mouth that opened way down under his chin, as though it had been placed there



CATCHING A SHARK.

by mistake. He was snapping at everything within his reach, and threw himself around very actively. The vigorous blows from the oar finally settled him, and a knife in his throat finished the business. It was excit-

ing sport while it lasted, and both the boys thought it must be capital fun to take a shark, provided he was not a very large one.

"I was at the Olympic Club one summer," said the Doctor, "when two of the members were out one day with the yacht, and saw some men having a fight with a shark; so they anchored close by, and put out a line just for the fun of the thing. In half an hour they had a six-foot shark along-side, and, after a vigorous fight, they captured him, and brought him home in triumph. A few days afterward they took two sharks in one afternoon, and for the rest of the season they were famous as shark-fishers, and unwilling to pursue any smaller game.



SHARK-FISHING ON THE FLORIDA COAST.

"Down on the coast of Florida," he continued, "is the place for shark-fishing in all its glory. I've seen them there so thick that their back fins, sticking out of water, could be counted by the dozen at once: they generally swim so near the surface that their back fins are visible, and this is the cause of many of them coming to grief. The fins can be seen for a long distance, and the fishers are able to get quite near them by simply following the mark on the water.

"I was out one day in a sail-boat with two others, when we saw a school of sharks a quarter of a mile or more to windward. We worked around so as to get among them as quietly as possible, and in course of time we were not more than two yards from a fine fellow at least ten feet long. We had a harpoon of the kind used by whalers, and a stout

line for holding it. When a good chance came we threw the harpoon into the shark's sides, and made the line fast to the side of the boat.



FISH FROM THE BAY.

"He went away with us like a race-horse, and towed the boat so fast that the spray rose around our bows, and almost drenched us. Occasionally he doubled, and once he went around so quick and short as to give the boat an unpleasant twist, and nearly threw me into the water. He dragged us a couple of miles, and then his strength gave out and he slowed down. We gradually drew in the line, and got him near enough to put a lance into his neck and kill him. Then we towed him in, and found that he measured ten feet and three inches when he was stretched out on the dock. Several times I had a similar experience, and can assure you it was very exciting while it lasted."

"What other fish do you catch in the bay?" one of the boys inquired, as he turned toward the skipper.

"Well," was the response, "there's blackfish, and kingfish, and weak-fish, and porgies, and skates, and flounders, and I don't know how many other kinds. Then we catch eels, and crabs, and sheep's-head, and dog-fish, and moss-bunkers, and there are acres and acres of the bay planted with oysters; and then—just look there!"

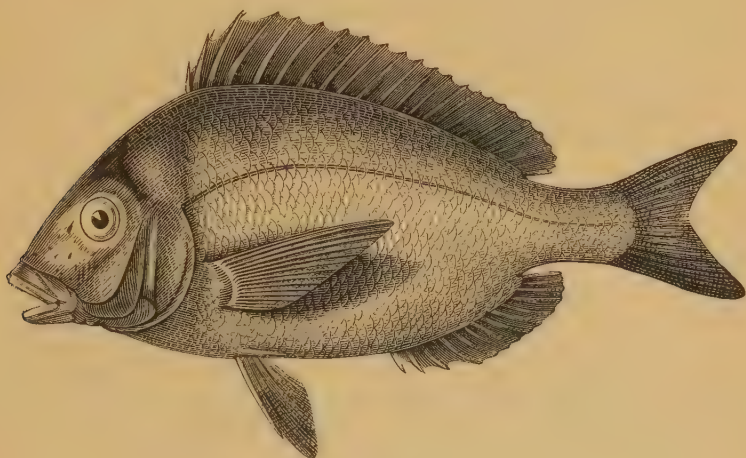


A QUEER FISH.

As he spoke they were sailing close to a boat wherein a young man was holding up a queer-looking fish that the skipper pronounced a sea-robin. It had a complex arrangement of fins, and altogether seemed almost as well fitted to fly as to swim. The skipper said the

sea-robin was good for nothing, as nobody considered him fit to eat. He was a great robber of the bait on fish-hooks, and was not a favorite of the fishermen; for this reason he was generally knocked on the head and then tossed overboard.

Then he described another odd product of the bay, that was known as the blow-fish, and had the power of inflating himself with air when taken out of the water. The boatmen had a trick of compelling him to do so by rolling him under their feet. When thus inflated he was as round as a full-blown bladder, but if thrown on the water while in this condition he speedily reduced himself to his original dimensions, and dived below.



THE PORGY.

“A very abundant fish in all the waters around New York,” the Doctor remarked, “is the porgy, or porgie. He is so abundant that he is very cheap, and therefore he comes in play as the food of thousands of poor people who cannot afford the cost of cod or blue-fish. In some localities he is called seup, or scuppang, and he is known to the scientific men as the *Stenotomus argyrops*. The flesh is sweet and of excellent flavor, and would be highly prized by the epicures if it was held at a high price; but as it is cheap, it is not fashionable, and you might ask in vain for porgies at the first-class hotels and restaurants, and be compelled to pay a high price for fish not half as good in quality. In summer it is the custom in New York for fishing-parties to go in steamers to the Cholera Banks, as they are called, close to the coast of New Jersey. There seems to be an unfailing supply of porgies at these banks, and the many thou-

sands that are caught there do not make any apparent reduction of the grand total. The porgy has a small mouth, and he is a great robber of bait. Only the smallest hooks can catch him, and sometimes a fisherman will have his hook stripped a dozen times before he succeeds in catching one of the little fellows."

"If you run a little way up some of the creeks," said the skipper, "you can catch a few trout now and then, by way of a change, but they don't bite out here in the bay. It isn't the season for trout now," he continued, "and you have to put up with something else. If we have good luck with the blue-fish, you'll have all the sport you want."



MOUTH OF A SOUTH BAY CREEK.

CHAPTER XII.

AMONG THE BLUE-FISH.—THROUGH LONG ISLAND SOUND.

THE boat sailed onward down the channel, and went out into the broad Atlantic. As she crossed the bar at the inlet the skipper pointed to a box beneath the seat in the little cabin, and told the Doctor he would find plenty of lines and squids in it. Harry had heard of a fish called the squid, and he naturally expected the box would be full of them. But when the lines were brought out, he found that the squid was a counterfeit affair made of lead or pewter, and cast on the shank of a large hook. The Doctor unrolled one of the lines, and allowed it to trail over the stern of the boat. The boys followed his example, and in a few minutes three lines were in the water, and the deceptive squids were dancing on the waves twenty or thirty yards astern of the little craft. The Doctor explained that the blue-fish mistakes the bit of shining pewter for the real squid, and he is so voracious that he bites at it without stopping to examine it closely.

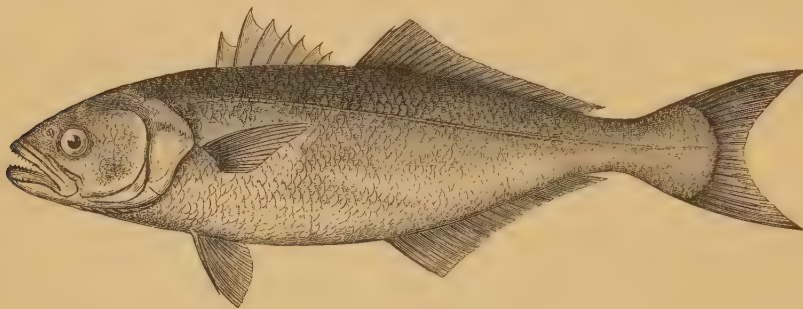
“How will I know when a fish bites my hook?” George inquired.



SCENE IN GREAT SOUTH BAY.

"I think you will have no trouble in discovering it," said the Doctor, with a smile. "Wait and see."

"The blue-fish," he continued, "is a member of the mackerel family. His scientific name is *Temnodon saltator*, of the genus *Scombridæ*, and he



THE BLUE-FISH.

is variously known along the Atlantic coast as the horse-mackerel, skip-jack, sea-tailor, and greenfish. He is the most voracious fish that swims in the sea, and when he makes his appearance he carries terror to other members of the finny tribe. Blue-fish travel in schools, and their chief occupation seems to be the destruction of everything else that comes in their way. When they have gorged themselves full of food, they continue to eat, and I have often brought them into the boat with their stomachs distended almost to the bursting point. Sometimes the track of a school is marked by a streak of blood on the water, and if you look closely you will see fragments of fish scattered here and there that they are unable to swallow. They will kill fishes as large as themselves, and sometimes you will find a dead fish with a piece bitten out of its side as clean as though cut with a knife.

"It pursues the common mackerel, and the menhaden, or moss-bunker, and frequently drives them on shore. When you see a school of menhaden, you will often find the blue-fish near them, and if the school is a large one the havoc will be very great. One way to find where they are is to watch the gulls flying over the water; they indicate the position of the menhaden, and these again indicate the position of the blue-fish.

"If you happen to take one, you must look out how you draw him into the boat. Keep the line taut, or he will shake himself free. Sometimes he jumps out of the water six or eight feet in the direction of the boat, and by so doing gains slack enough to shake the hook from his mouth; and when you get him in the boat you must look out for his

teeth, as they are very sharp, and can inflict a severe wound. The squids are bitten and scarred by his teeth, and the lines must be protected by wire for the last foot or two of their length, to prevent their being bitten off by the fish when he seizes the bait. His jaws are like iron, and he can—”

Further remarks were suddenly postponed for the present. Almost



AMONG THE BLUE-FISH.

simultaneously the three lines were straightened out, and the holders thereof felt a tingle in their fingers that extended up to their shoulders, and thence down to their toes. They had struck a school of blue-fish, and for a few minutes the sport was of the most exciting character. The boys obeyed the injunction of the Doctor, and kept their lines as taut as possible. George brought his fish into the boat safely, but the one on Harry's

line managed to free himself, much to the young gentleman's disappointment. The boatman swung the tiller around a little, so as to slacken speed, and make the work of hauling in less difficult; but even with this aid the boys had all they wished to do. The captured fish were dropped into the bottom of the boat, and in three or four minutes all was quiet again.

"We'll go back and give them another try," said the skipper, as he brought the boat around to sail once more through the school.

The trial proved successful, and this time Harry was the first to get his fish on board. George brought in another; but the Doctor, in spite of his experience among blue-fish, did not secure anything. Another turn among the members of the marine school resulted in a single fish and a couple of bites; but after that, when the boat went about again, the fish refused to take the hook. Then they headed off the land a little, and in a short time another school was found, which afforded several prizes. The boys found their fingers somewhat cut by the lines, and the Doctor told them it was well to protect their hands with gloves while out blue-fishing, especially in the later months of the year, when the fish frequently weighed ten or twelve pounds each. The prizes for that day were from five to seven pounds in weight, the largest hardly exceeding the latter figure.

It was noon, and they were hungry; and so an attack was made on lunch-basket and clam-bucket. The boys pronounced the clams the finest they had ever tasted, and thought the clam ought to feel happy at being so highly prized. "His praises are in every mouth," said Harry, "or certainly in every mouth where he has been."

George asked if the Latin proverb *de profundis clamari* had any reference to the bivalve they were discussing.

The Doctor did not think so, as the words *de profundis* meant "out of the deep," and the South Bay was so shallow that it was not entitled to the distinction indicated in the phrase.

"Poetry has been written about the clam," said the Doctor; "some of it in a serious vein, but much oftener it is humorous."

"I know a nursery rhyme about the clam," said George, "and it may be new to you. Here it is:

"There was a young man of Siam,
Who never had looked at a clam;
So he swallowed the shell,
But it made him unwell;
And he said, 'Tis a great big fool that I am.'"

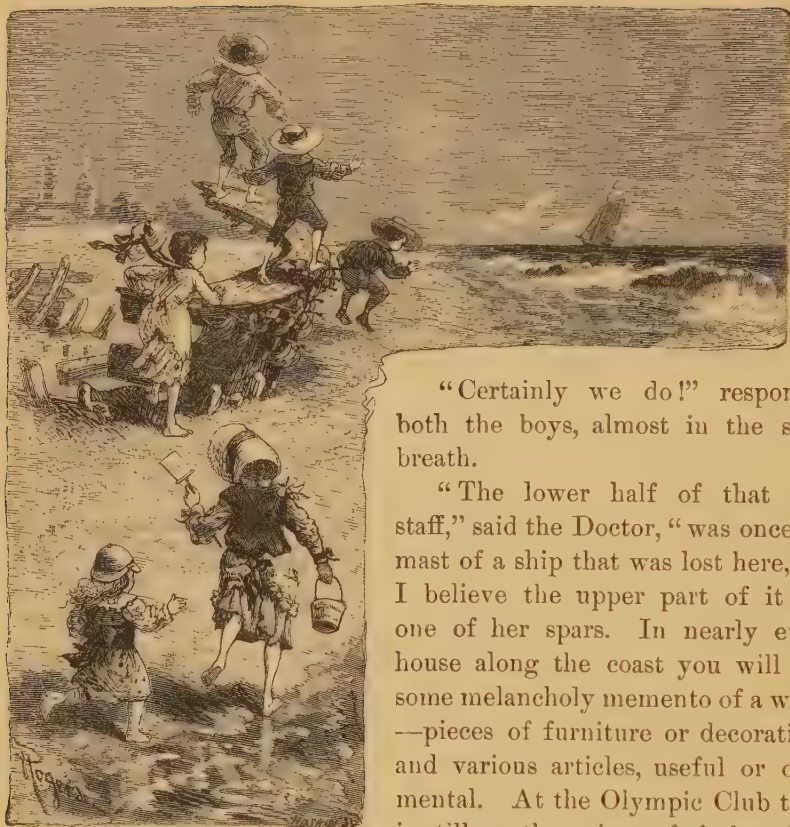
"Do they have clams in Siam?" Harry inquired.

The Doctor said he could not tell positively, but he thought they did not. He had been in Siam, and never saw a clam there or heard of one. Consequently, the rhyme that George had just given them might have a foundation in fact, though it did not reflect creditably on the intelligence of the youthful Siamese. His conclusion, after the result of his experiment had developed itself, was the most sensible part of the whole proceeding.

They were sailing up and down the front of Fire Island Beach, where the surf was breaking along the sands, and throwing up long crests of white foam that seemed to be chasing each other from the depths of the Atlantic. Here and there were scattered the summer visitors; some sitting or walking in the sand; others listening to the music of the wild waves of the ocean; and others, again, indulging in the luxury of a bath in the cooling waters. The sky was unclouded; the breeze was of a balmy coolness, and it swept steadily in from the sea, and kept the sail of the little boat filled to its proper tension. The waters were dotted with the sails of dozens of boats like their own, whose occupants were on pleasure bent; and here and there were larger craft, holding their course farther at sea, and evidently dreading a near acquaintance with the shore. Six or eight miles out from the land was a great ocean-steamer, with a cloud of smoke pouring from her funnels, and trailing behind her in a long black cloud betwixt sea and sky. Along the southern horizon stretched the coast of New Jersey, just visible through the delicate haze; westward was the sandy shore of Long Island; while away to the east lay the limitless ocean, its waves dancing in the sunlight, and growing more and more faint in their outlines, till lost in the curving rim that marked the connection between the waters and the blue dome above.

A dark object on the beach, where some children were playing, caught the attention of one of the boys. He pointed toward it, and asked the Doctor what it was.

"A wreck," was the answer, "and if you look farther along the beach you will see another. This part of the coast is dangerous, and many a noble ship has found her grave in these sands; and not only the ship, but often her crew and whatever passengers she may have on board are swallowed by the waves, and not a soul escapes. Hardly a year passes without a wreck on this sandy beach, and there are several cases recorded in the local history of the coast where not a single person escaped to tell the story. You remember that tall flag-staff in front of the Olympic Club-house?"



A SAD MEMENTO.

"Certainly we do!" responded both the boys, almost in the same breath.

"The lower half of that flag-staff," said the Doctor, "was once the mast of a ship that was lost here, and I believe the upper part of it was one of her spars. In nearly every house along the coast you will find some melancholy memento of a wreck—pieces of furniture or decorations, and various articles, useful or ornamental. At the Olympic Club there is still another piece of timber from a wrecked ship, and it has a special

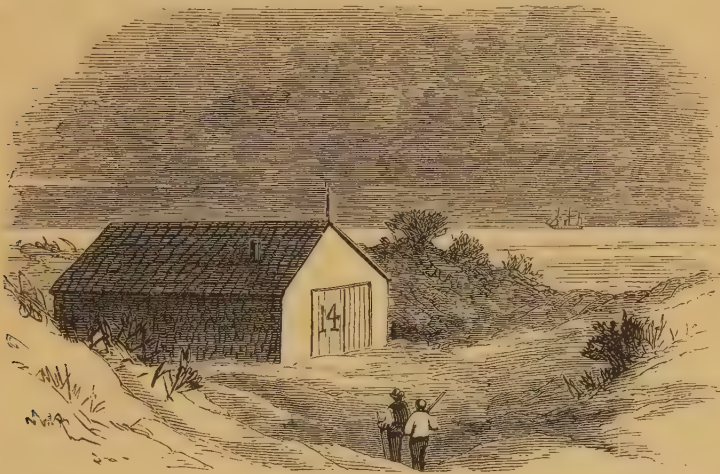
interest for all lovers of American literature."

"What is that?"

"It is the little post that stands in the middle of the lawn, and supports a miniature house where a large family of sparrows make their home. For years it was a flag-staff like the larger one, but, becoming decayed, it was cut down and applied to its present use. It was originally the main boom of the bark *Elizabeth*, that was wrecked on Fire Island beach in 1850. Among her passengers was the Countess Ossoli, better known by her maiden name of Margaret Fuller. She was one of the foremost American writers in the first half of this century, and though more than thirty years have passed since her death, her works are widely read at the present time. She, with her husband and infant son, were passengers on the *Elizabeth*, and all met their deaths on the sandy shore on which you are now looking. Some of the members of the Olympic

Club bought the piece of timber I have indicated at the sale of the remains of the vessel, and doubtless other fragments might be found in the neighborhood if a careful search were made.

"Many are the stories told of the daring of the inhabitants of the coast in rescuing the victims of the wrecks, and of their kindness in aiding the sufferers. The Government has established life-saving stations at the most dangerous points along the coast, and many lives are saved every year by the men attached to this humane service. There is one of them," he continued, as he pointed to a small building a little way back from the line of surf, and among the sandy hummocks. "It contains a life-boat, and all the needed appliances for rescuing persons from wrecked ships,



A LIFE-SAVING STATION.

and during the winter season there are from six to ten men constantly on duty there to watch for ships that come ashore in storms or from other causes.

"One of the most remarkable stories I ever heard of the saving of life on a wrecked vessel has a Newfoundland dog as its hero."

"Why, how curious!"

"A ship was wrecked off a rocky point on the coast of Massachusetts not far from Cohasset. There was no life-boat station near, and no ordinary boat could live in the storm. A crowd gathered on the beach in sight of the wreck, but they could do nothing, and it seemed as if all on board the ship would be drowned.

"A man named Lincoln lived near there, who possessed a Newfound-

land dog of unusual intelligence. The dog seemed to understand that the ship was in danger, and some one suggested that he could be induced to swim out and bring a line from the ship to the shore. It took some time to get him to comprehend what was wanted, but finally he grasped the idea, and started through the surf. It was a hard struggle with the waves, and several times it seemed as though he would be unable to make his way against them. He persevered, and succeeded in reaching the side of the ship, where a bit of wood, to which a light cord had been attached, was thrown to him.

"Seizing the wood in his mouth he swum back to the shore, and had just strength left to crawl up the sands and deliver the stick to his anxiously waiting master. Wasn't he greeted with a round of cheers, and didn't everybody do all he could to restore the exhausted animal? By means of the cord a stout line was brought to shore, and then a cable, and over the cable every man, woman, and child on that ship was rescued.



A DOG TO THE RESCUE.

And for years afterward, and as long as he lived, the dog was the pride of the inhabitants of all the region around there, and hundreds of people came to see him. He seemed to understand what it was all about; for al-

ways when a storm came up he would go out on the beach and watch the ships as they sailed by. Happily he never had occasion to show his intelligence in the same way, as no other wreck was thrown there during his lifetime."

"If you want to get back in good season," said the skipper, "we had better be on the home-stretch before long. The wind is likely to drop soon, and besides, we shall have the tide against us after four o'clock."

The Doctor gave the word, and the cat-boat was speedily on the way to the bar, which she passed with the last of the flood-tide. By five o'clock they were at the little dock where the boats of the Olympic Club make their landings, well pleased with the result of the day's trip.

"What kinds of fish have you taken to-day?" the commodore asked, as soon as the party was seated under the trees in front of the dining-room of the club.

"Oh, nothing but blue-fish," one of the boys replied. "We saw some men take a shark, and we passed by boats that had other kinds of fish on board. But there wasn't anything on our hooks to-day but blue-fish."

"The Doctor must have changed his habits," the commodore remarked, "if he didn't have you catch at least one hammer-fish. He used to be one of the champions of that kind of sport."

The Doctor smiled, and then explained to the boys that a custom prevailed once on a time among the club-men of allowing every verdant visitor to catch a hammer-fish on his first excursion in a cat-boat.

"The attention of the victim," said he, "is first attracted to some object that causes him to look away from the direction in which his line is



NOT A HAMMER-FISH.

trailing over the stern of the boat. While he is thus engaged his line is drawn in surreptitiously, and some heavy object, generally a hammer, is attached to it. Line and hammer are then thrown overboard, and when the line straightens out the hammer gives a jerk that makes the novice believe he has hooked nothing less than a ten-pound blue-fish.

"His eyes fairly dance with excitement. He hauls away with all his might, the hammer darting here and there in the water, and making a remarkable imitation of the motions of a fish. The rest of the party add to the perturbation of the fisherman by hauling in their own lines, giving him a dozen contradictory admonitions, and shouting as though their heads had suddenly been turned. Nearer and nearer comes the prize, and larger grow the eyes of the victim, and at last he brings his fish over the stern of the boat, to find it is no fish at all, but only a rusty hammer.

"That is the hammer-fish of Great South Bay, and many a man has caught not only one but half a dozen. Some of the practical jokers once rigged up a fish of tin, with a swivel through his nose, and a snap-hook on the swivel, so that the counterfeit could be placed on the line of a verdant man without the trouble of hauling it in."

The boys were pretty well fatigued with their day on the water, and before nine in the evening they were in bed and sound asleep. The next day the *Lotos* left the hospitality of the Olympic Club behind her, and sailed out of the bay and away to the eastward.

The breeze was excellent, and they went along at a fine rate. Every sail of the *Lotos* that could possibly draw was set to catch it, and the way she dashed through the water roused the enthusiasm of the boys, who thought it about the best fun they had ever known. Toward sunset the wind fell, and the yacht passed the night at sea, where the boys were lulled to sleep by the steady rocking of the little craft on the waves and the dashing of the waters on her sides. In the morning they rounded Montauk Point, the eastern extremity of Long Island, and passed close to a small steamer, which the skipper briefly described as a bunker-boat.

"They're fishing for moss-bunkers," he explained. "See those small boats along-side, and the net that they're scooping the fish out of by the bushel. When they see a school of bunkers they send out the small boats and surround it with the net; then they haul the net in, and they have the bunkers safe and sure if they have done the work right. When they've got 'em they haul the net along-side the steamer, and dip the fish out with that great bucket you see travelling back and forth. They are dumped into the hold of the steamer, and when she's full she goes to port, where the oil is to be tried out."



A BUNKER-BOAT NEAR MONTAUK POINT.

"How many do they take at a time?" one of the boys asked.

"That depends a good deal on luck," responded the skipper. "Sometimes the school gets away by sinking down before the bottom of the net is closed. In such a case they don't get a single fish, or but very few; but the men in the business are careful not to have such an accident happen often. Fifty thousand is a good haul—a very good one, and a hundred thousand is first-rate. I've known a boat to take three hundred and fifty thousand in a single haul; but it was unusual luck, and can't be counted on to last. There's about seventy steamers in the business, and the town of Greenport, where we're going, has half a million dollars invested in steamers, boats, nets, and other things necessary for bunker-fishing. I'm told that more'n fifty million moss-bunkers are caught every year, but I can't say for certain, as I never counted 'em."

The yacht rounded the point, and stood away to the west once more. She was bound for Greenport, where she remained a day, and then the party proceeded to Sag Harbor. A week was passed in a pleasant cruise around the eastern extremity of Long Island and the waters as far east as Newport, and then the *Lotos* was headed for New York. On the re-

turn voyage she passed through Long Island Sound, stopping at New London for a few hours, and thence going direct to the anchorage where the boys first saw her.

The boys found they had passed a most agreeable fortnight, and they agreed, without wasting a moment in discussion, that the time would be very long before they forgot their cruise on the *Lotos*. Their last evening on Long Island Sound was rendered memorable by a beautiful sunset, which George endeavored to retain by means of a sketch. Harry remarked that a sunset without color could hardly be considered perfect, and was not altogether unlike "Hamlet" without Hamlet; but he added that a sketch in plain black and white was far better than no sketch at all, and therefore he quite approved the effort of George in that direction.



SUNSET ON LONG ISLAND SOUND.

CHAPTER XIII.

AMONG THE ADIRONDACKS.—A DAY'S TROUT-FISHING.

THREE days after their return from the cruise on the yacht the Doctor announced to the boys that he had another pleasure expedition arranged for them.

"I'm going to take you to the Adirondacks," said he, "and show you some of the attractions of that famous mountain region. The Adirondacks have been greatly overpraised, but there are many pleasant features about them that I think you will enjoy; so get your baggage ready, and we will start to-morrow."

He further informed them that he would attend to all the necessities in the shape of guns, ammunition, fishing-tackle, and the like; and the only thing they need take any trouble about was their personal outfits. "Take pretty much the same quantity and quality of clothing that you had on the yacht cruise, and you will not be far out of the way; and if you find that you have omitted anything, we can supply the want without much trouble when we reach the mountains."

The party went by rail to Saratoga, where they remained a day, and then proceeded by the well-known routes of travel to the heart of the Adirondacks. The Doctor was familiar with the region, and it was his desire to get as far as possible from the regular track of the tourists, who know little about hunting and fishing, and whose chief accomplishment is in spoiling the sport for every one else. He knew a quiet little nook where the tourist had not penetrated, and where the manners of the people were not corrupted by the influx of men and women from the city. Thither he directed his route, and he kept it as secret as possible, and did not even tell the boys where he was going, for fear they might betray him in an unguarded moment. We will respect his privacy, and, if any reader of our narrative thinks he recognizes the place by the description given herein, it is hoped that he will not say so above a whisper.

As the wagon rattled to the front of the log-house where the Doctor intended to stop, the driver shouted a sonorous, "Here we are!" The

call brought to the door a stout, matronly body with a proportionally developed head, which was adorned with a cap and a pair of steel-bowed spectacles. The personage was no other than Mrs. Fisher—we'll call her so, but that was not her name—and the most polite man in the world could hardly venture to call her young.

"How de do, Doctor?" she exclaimed, in a cheery voice, as she extended her hand toward the wagon, "we've been looking for you this summer, and felt sure you'd come."

The Doctor was out of the wagon almost at the instant it stopped, and the boys speedily followed him. After a hearty hand-shake with Mrs.



"HOW DE DO, DOCTOR?"

Fisher, he introduced the boys, and then the party entered the house, while the driver unloaded the baggage from his conveyance. He was assisted in this work by Mrs. Fisher's son James. She generally alluded to him as "my boy," but as he was on the shady side of forty, the appellation did not fit him very closely. When he was not called "my boy," he was addressed as "Jim," and he said that when anybody called him "James," it seemed as though some one else than himself was alluded to. Jim was the bachelor son of his widowed mother, and the two were much attached to each other. Mrs. Fisher

kept house, while Jim managed their little farm that had been cleared up from the forest, and he served as guide and assistant to the few visitors that found their way into that part of the wilderness in summer. The Doctor had been there several times, and was regarded by mother and son as a warm personal friend rather than as a customer from the city.

It was late in the afternoon when the party arrived at Fishers', and the good old lady told them she would have supper ready in about half an hour. The intervening time was spent in unpacking the baggage and getting out some of the odds and ends needed for a toilet in the backwoods, and they were still occupied at it when supper was announced. The meal consisted of game from the forest and trout from the brook, together with some delicious fresh butter, and bread made from the product

of the soil of that region. After supper the boys went to sit on a bench in front of the house, but they had not been there long before a painful sensation troubled their faces, as though a hot flame was passing over them. Harry asked the Doctor what it was.

"Oh, nothing," was the reply; "nothing but punkies."

"I guess I'll bring you a smudge to keep 'em off," said Jim; and away he went to return in a few moments with a shovel on which were some live coals. The shovel was placed on the ground close to the boys' feet, and then some dried leaves and bits of decayed wood were laid on the coals. A dense smoke rose from the shovel, and as Jim had predicted, it soon put the punkies to flight. Naturally, the next question of the boys was concerning the character of the cause of their sufferings.

"The punky," the Doctor explained, "is a small gnat, so small indeed that you can hardly see him with the naked eye. He can make himself very troublesome, and a good deal of the pleasure of the Adirondacks is destroyed by his presence."

The smoke nearly stifled the boys, and they were unable to say which gave the greatest discomfort, the smudge or the punkies. The Doctor brought out some veils he had brought with him; the boys wrapped their heads in these veils, and thus rendered their faces secure against the attacks of their tormentors.

One of the topics of conversation during the evening was the growing popularity of the Adirondacks, and the rapidity with which the country was becoming settled. Jim

thought it would not be long before there would be at least two hunters for every deer in the forest, and a fisherman for every trout in the streams. The game was fast disappearing, and unless the Legislature



PUNKIES ABOUT.



A SMUDGE.

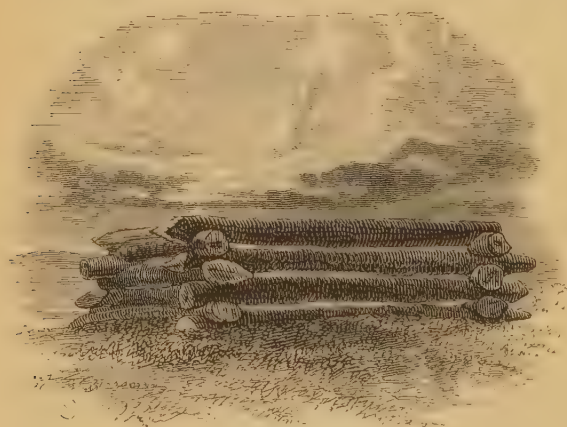
passed laws for its protection, and attended to their enforcement, it would soon be impossible to find a single deer from one end of the mountain region to the other.



THE TRAVELLERS' HOME.

"It's getting too thick of people," said he, "and we shall be crowded out of here before ten years have come again. There's half a dozen settlers within three miles of here, and down on Swan River a fellow has actually opened a hotel. He calls it 'The Travellers' Home,' and sells

beer over a counter just like a place in the city. The wilderness won't be the wilderness much longer.



A CLAIM CABIN.

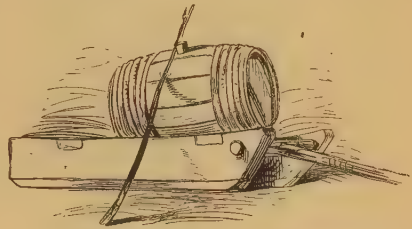
"Last year, a fellow who thought he could make money by preempting some land went to work to put up a claim cabin. He threw a few logs together like the foundation of a house, and then looked around for a land-office

where he could register his claim. He was rather astonished when he found there was no land-office here, since the government title was extin-

guished long ago. He'd been in the business out West, and didn't stop to consider the difference between New York and Dakota."

Bedtime came, and soon after sleep. The boys were out early in the morning to breathe the fresh air of the mountains, and see the sun rise above the horizon. The great luminary was obliged to climb a mountain that formed the eastern boundary of the little valley where the Fisher cabin stood, and consequently the day was well advanced before the sun was visible. Jim told them they were not so badly off as some folks he knew over in the next valley, who didn't get the sun till eleven in the forenoon, and he had heard of a place out West where the sun didn't rise at all till three o'clock in the afternoon of the next day. "Come along," said he, "if you want to see the water-works of Fisher's City."

He led the way to the water-works, which consisted of a barrel mounted on a sled with broad runners. One of the first duties of the day was to supply the house with water, and accordingly Jim harnessed a demure-looking steed and attached him to the very primitive vehicle. A journey to a neighboring spring occupied several minutes, and then Jim proceeded to split a log that had every appearance of being a tough case.



THE WATER-WORKS.

Harry thought it was about the worst specimen he had ever seen; it was full of knots from one end to the other, and, as it was nearly three feet in diameter, it was no easy thing to attack. George thought nothing short of gunpowder could divide it, but he was undeceived when Jim made a little crevice with his axe, and then inserted an iron wedge. A few vigorous blows with a heavy beetle sunk the wedge in the log, and started a line of cleavage; this was followed with another wedge, and in a little while the log was divided and ready for a subdivision. Jim declared he had split logs that were twice as bad as the one before him, and said he should be thankful if he never had anything worse to do than what he had just accomplished.

Breakfast was announced in due time, and soon after it was finished the party started for its first tramp in the woods.

Trout-fishing was the sport of the day, and there was a general overhauling of rods, and lines, and all the other paraphernalia of that occupation. The boys had never handled a trout rod, and did not understand its manipulation, but the explanations of Jim and the Doctor gave them

all the theories they wanted. Theory was to be followed by practice, and for this they sought the water where trout were said to abound.

The Doctor brought out a jointed rod, with all the patents in the way of click-reels, leaders, tips, and the like; the rods that the boys carried were less elaborate in style, but quite good enough for beginners. Jim

said they would have no trouble in taking all they wanted, as the lake he would lead them to was not visited by the regular tourists, and the trout had not learned all the tricks of keeping their jaws safe from hooks. "Over where the tourists come," said he, "there are trout in the streams that have been there for years, and know every kind of fly that can be brought out. You can't fool 'em for a cent; you may drop the best imitation-fly in front of their noses, and they just turn 'em up and swim off as dignified as a horse going to the watering-trough. They've been tickled with the points of hooks till they know just what they are, and it is real fun for 'em to watch the antics of the fellows who call themselves sportsmen."

They had a walk of a couple of miles along what Jim persisted in calling a good road. The boys could not discover any special goodness about it, as it consisted of rocks piled together with great irregularity, and an occasional intermingling of stumps and fallen trees. They met a horseman picking his way along with considerable difficulty, and evidently not in the best of temper. He had been



THE DOCTOR GETTING READY.

the victim of a mishap half an hour before, in attempting to get around a log which lay across the road. As luck would have it, the log had chosen a boggy place to fall in, and when the stranger left the road to pass around the obstruction, his horse became mired, and the rider was neatly plastered over with mud in consequence. Jim said strangers were often veneered in that way, and he cautioned the boys against straying from the road where swamps were to be passed, and told them it was a good rule always to look at the ground before you put your foot on it.



THE GOOD ROAD.

At one point they came to a branch road that led to a clearing seven miles farther in the forest. The direction and distance were indicated on a pine tree that had been stripped of its bark on one side till a suitable spot was secured for a sign. The lettering was done with red chalk, and the spelling and the formation of letters and figures did not indicate a great familiarity with Webster's Dictionary. But however rude the chirography, the information was correct, and, as Jim remarked, that was the most important part of it. "Speak well of the bridge that carries you safely over," said the Doctor, "and respect the mile-stone that puts you in the right way."

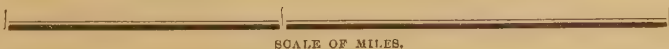


THE MILE-STONE.

The two miles stretched out rather longer than the boys had expected. Jim explained that it was the roughness made them seem longer, and he also admitted that the surveyors who measured the miles did not have their instruments along at the time, and simply made a guess of it. "To be sure that there would be good measure," he continued, "they threw in a little more on each mile, and sometimes the addition was greater than the original. Harry suggested a scale of miles for the Adirondacks which was something like the following:

ONE MILE.

A LITTLE MORE.



SCALE OF MILES.

Jim declared that the miles were marked off in the Adirondacks in the same way as in the backwoods of Maine and Minnesota. "They measure them with a wolf skin, and make no allowance for the tail; and, as the tail is the longest part of it, the miles are pulled out a good deal farther than suits the taste of the tender-footed visitors from the city."



MAGGIE'S LAKE.

They reached the stream, and then Jim left them a few minutes, while he went to a clump of bushes a little way along the bank. From beneath the bushes he pulled a skiff, which had been so carefully concealed that only a careful search on the part of a stranger would have found it.

"We'll go down about a mile," said Jim, "and then we'll make a carry to Maggie's Lake. 'Tisn't known on the maps as Maggie's, but that's the name I gave it for an old sweetheart of mine. It's full of trout, and you'll have all the sport you want. You can fish along the stream while we are floating down, and you'll be sure to take something weighing half a pound or so. We haven't time to fish the stream very carefully, as I want to get you to the lake before the sun gets too high for comfort."

The Doctor got his tackle in readiness, and as the boat floated along he threw a fly on the water. Instantly there was a whirl in the clear stream, and the fly disappeared. The line straightened out, and the fish that was evidently the cause of the straightening made for the shelter of a stump which overhung the stream. The Doctor played him a moment, and then reeled him in; he was safely brought into the boat, and proved to be a half-pounder, as Jim had predicted.



JIM AND THE BOAT.

Harry was next instructed how to throw a fly, and succeeded very well. He made two or three casts without success, but finally a trout rose and took the deceptive bait. He was well hooked, and the reel brought

him in to the side of the boat, where he was secured by the landing-net. Then George made an attempt, and by the time he had caught his fish, a small affair weighing about three ounces, the boat was at the carry. The boys had been too busy with trouting to ask about the carry, but now they wished to know what it was.



OARS AND PADDLES AT STARTING.

"It's a carry, and no mistake," said Jim. "You have to carry everything on your backs from here to the lake, and when you have a lot of camp stuff to shoulder, it's no joke. We sha'n't have a hard time of it to-day, as we haven't much besides the skiff, but we'll have all we want.

"Some gentlemen that were here last summer didn't think it was fun. There were two of 'em with me one

hot day, and we started for a carry over to the lake. I took the boat, just as I'm going to take it now, and one of the gentlemen said he'd carry the oars and paddles, while the other took a gun and a pair of boots, along with a bundle that contained the day's provisions.

"You should have seen those two men start off. The one with the oars and paddles gathered 'em under his arms, and went on up the hill as brisk as you please, and the other fellow was after him in a few moments. I took the boat on my shoulders and followed, and pretty soon I overtook Mr. Paddler with everything flying this way and that. He couldn't hold 'em together at all, and the more he tried to gather 'em up the more he couldn't do anything of the sort.

"The other one stopped and laughed at him, but he hadn't gone far before he didn't feel at all like a laugh. When we got to the lake, he said the weight of the things he was carrying began to increase before he had gone a quarter of a mile, and after that every step he took added a pound to his burden. He thought the gun must have weighed a thousand pounds at least before he unloaded; and as for the boots, every nail in heels and soles was equal to a railway-spike.



GUN AND BOOTS AT STARTING.



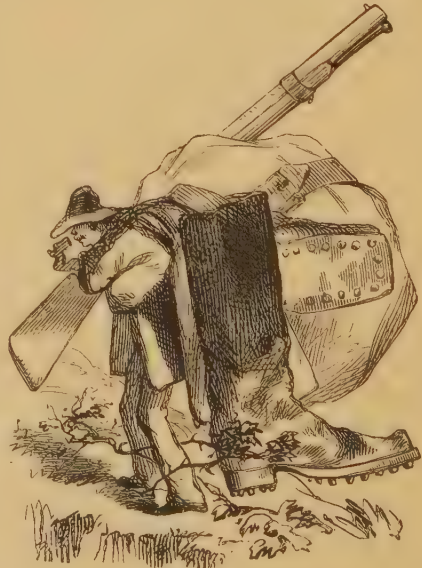
OARS AND PADDLES ON THE WAY.

thought the fish were altogether too easy to catch, and he deprecated their abundance, as there was not sufficient skill required for their capture to make it exciting. Jim said he could easily fix that for him by bringing a lot of strangers there the following year, and then the trout would soon be wild enough for his taste. The Doctor smiled, and said he would choose the least of the two evils, and the lake could remain undisturbed.

The boys acquitted themselves finely, and in spite of their inexperience each of them bagged three or four fish that were estimated to average half a pound. The sun was high in the heavens, and the air grew warmer, so that Jim suggested a cessation of sport for a while. He directed the boat to the shore, and said they would go and put up at the hotel. The boys looked in the locality he indicated, but no hotel was visible, and Harry intimated as much to their guide.

"It is astonishing how a load increases as you go along, if you are not used to carrying it. At first it seems too small for your strength, and you wonder they did not give you something more. A quarter of a mile changes your views materially, and by the time you have made a mile you wonder if you will really be able to go a dozen yards farther. So my advice is never to undertake anything in the wilderness that will fatigue you unnecessarily, and if you have a load to carry, get some one else to take it if you can."

They reached the lake and launched the boat, and then the trout-fishing began in dead earnest. The Doctor



GUN AND BOOTS ON ARRIVAL.

"Well, 'twas there a week ago," he replied, "and I don't think anybody has carried it off."

When the boat reached the land the boys sprung out, and made another search for the hotel. They soon found it, but it was hardly as extensive as they had imagined. After they had examined it throughout, George asked Jim how the building was constructed.

"It's easy enough to make," was the reply, "provided you've got the place and the materials. The first thing to be done is to pick out a spot where you can have a clean space eighteen or twenty feet across after you've cleared off the brush. You want an old log on the southern side of your clearing; then you put up a couple of posts for the front, and a



HOTEL IN THE BACKWOODS.

stout stick from one to the other makes the beam for placing the rafters so that they will slope back to the log. Next you girdle a few hemlock-trees in the neighborhood and strip off the bark, and this bark makes an excellent covering for roof and sides. The front is left open, a fire is built a little way off to throw its heat inside during the chilly night, and your hotel is complete. You make the ground inside as smooth as possible, and then you cover it with hemlock boughs a foot or two in thickness, and you have a bed that beats all the spring mattresses ever invented."

"I don't know a bed that can equal a hemlock one," said the Doctor, "when you are tired out with a long day's tramp in the mountains, and have come into camp for rest. The aroma of the boughs is delicious beyond description, and so is that which is thrown off by the freshly peeled bark on the roof. No princess in the softest couch ever seen in a royal palace could sleep more soundly than I have on a bed of boughs from a

tree, and no epicure could possibly enjoy his pet dishes any better than I have enjoyed the simple fare of the camp."

"Hunger is said to make the best sauce," remarked Harry, "and perhaps weariness makes the softest bed."



THE KITCHEN.

"We'll see about the hunger part of it," said Jim; "follow me to the kitchen, and you'll see how they cook at this hotel."

They followed the guide to the kitchen, and Jim remarked, as he led the way, that he hoped they would not leave the door open. The kitchen was as primitive as the sleeping-quarters. It consisted of a couple of sticks set in the ground, with a horizontal one extending across them. Hooks are made of pieces of the birch-trees in the vicinity, and when a fire is kindled between the posts the kitchen is ready for its duties.

From a hollow log near by Jim drew a kettle and a frying-pan. The materials for the dinner were procured from the parcel they had brought from the house, and also from the trout-baskets. In fact, the trout formed the principal dish of the dinner; and under Jim's supervision they had baked trout, boiled trout, fried trout, and more trout when they wanted it. Some potatoes were boiled in the kettle; tea was made in a tin cup; and a few dry biscuits came out of the mysterious bag, to serve as bread. Jim was an adept in mountain cookery, and knew how to do a great deal with very limited materials. The backwoodsmen of the Adirondacks are famous for producing remarkable results with only a kettle and a frying-pan, and would put to shame some of the skilled *chefs* of the city.



THE DINING-SALOON.

From the kitchen they went to the dining-saloon, which had a roof much like that of the sleeping-room, but it was open all around, and had a table in the centre. The table was covered with hemlock bark—the same as the roof, and it had the distinguished honor of a seat made from a puncheon, or plank, split from a tree, and shaped with an axe. This was an achievement of the guide

in a former visit, when a party of gentlemen was camping there and wanted to be luxurious. Usually in a backwoods camp a log is the best seat that can be afforded, and quite as often there is no seat at all, and no table.

The trout and other edibles were placed on the table, and the party sat down to a delicious meal that had the very best of seasoning—a ravenous appetite. After dinner they rested awhile; then the fishing was renewed, and about the middle of the afternoon Jim suggested that it was time to go home. The pleasures of the carry were renewed, and then followed the paddle up stream and the walk along the road. It was dusk when they reached the house and were welcomed by Mrs. Fisher, who complimented the boys on their success in their first day among the trout.



A CAMP IN THE ADIRONDACKS.

CHAPTER XIV.

INCIDENTS OF DEER-HUNTING.

THE next scheme of the amateur Nimrods was for a deer-hunt. Another guide to assist Jim was engaged, and the guns and other necessities of the chase were put in readiness. The preparations consumed the entire day, and it was determined that all should go to bed in good season, and be ready for starting as soon as the sun was up. The plan was carried out to the letter, and by the appointed time the party was under way.

The route was the same as on the fishing-excursion as far as Maggie's Lake, and thence over a portage, or carry, to another sheet of water, known as Crystal Lake. Jim explained that two boats would be needed for the party, but it would only be necessary to take one along, as he had a bark canoe concealed in the bushes on the edge of Crystal Lake. In spite of this abundance of boats and the extra guide, the boys had all they wanted to do in carrying their share of the burdens over the portage. A camp was to be formed on Crystal Lake, and therefore they had more supplies and equipments than when they were out for only a single day.

They reached the lake about noon, and selected the site for their camp. The afternoon was spent in arranging it, and in preparing for a deer-hunt at night. George wondered why they should hunt in the night rather than in the daytime, but his wonder ceased when Jim explained the system to him.

"You see," said Jim, "the deer come down to the lake at night to feed on the lily-pads. They wade out into the water where it is half-way up their sides, and there they stay till they have eaten all they want; then they go back to the woods and stay there, unless some one hunts them with dogs, when quite likely they will come to the water again. It is a favorite dodge with deer to swim a lake or river when the dogs are after them, as they can destroy the scent, and throw the brutes off the track. We'll show you to-night how we hunt deer on the water."

The party was arranged in this wise: the Doctor and Jim were to go

in the skiff, while the boys with Bill, the new guide, were to occupy the canoe. The latter were not to do any shooting, but simply to look on and see how the Doctor managed it. "And above all things," said the Doctor, "you must make no noise, as the deer will take fright very easily, and be off for the woods before I can get a shot."



VIEW ON CRYSTAL LAKE.

The boys promised to comply with the Doctor's wishes, and Harry suggested that the best way of doing so would be to obey the directions of Bill without question or hesitation. George agreed with him, and with this understanding the party entered their boats at the appointed hour. There was no moon, and Bill explained to the boys that it was just the kind of night they wanted.

The skiff and canoe moved away from the landing-place in front of the camp, and struck out for the centre of the lake, to cross to the other

shore. Jim handled the oars vigorously, and shot the skiff forward with great rapidity, while Bill followed closely behind him with his powerful strokes of the paddle. As they neared the shore Jim slackened speed, and substituted a paddle for the oars; and Bill cautioned the boys to be perfectly still. They were not to speak even in a whisper, and were not to move a muscle till they heard the report of the Doctor's rifle. The position they occupied was not altogether comfortable, as they were seated in the bottom of the canoe without any rest for their backs; but they cheerfully complied with the regulations that had been established, and were as still as a pair of mice.

The boats went along in absolute silence, and soon came to the lily-pads growing in the water in a line extending a hundred yards or so from



DEER AT HOME.

the shore. A sound reached them as though a heavy body was dragging slowly along, and now Jim lighted a candle in a shaded box on the front

of the skiff. It was enclosed on three sides, but open on the fourth, and the opening allowed the light of the candle to be thrown forward, while the boat and all it contained were in perfect shadow.

The Doctor was directly behind the light, with his rifle ready to bring to the shoulder. The lily-pads abounded in frogs, who were possibly trying their voices, with a view to organizing a concert troupe or going on a serenading excursion. As the boats slid gently along they disturbed the amphibious vocalists, and the songs came to an end with a loud "bo-chug" that announced the departure of a frog for a more secure retreat in the water. Finding they were not harried they soon returned to their perches, and the songs were renewed in the rear of the boats with only a short interval of suspension.



THE DOCTOR'S DEER.

The dragging sound was changed to the steps of an animal in the water, and the practised ears of the guide and the Doctor told them that a fine deer was likely to become their prize, if they exercised proper precaution. The canoe was not a dozen yards behind the skiff, and directly in line with it, so that what was visible to the Doctor was also visible to the boys.

Soon the horns of a fine buck were plainly perceptible in the rays of light from the candle, and they seemed to the boys more like the dead branches of a tree than the ornaments and pride of a living animal. The skiff and the canoe were propelled without the least sound, and not even with a ripple of the water. The guides did not lift the paddles to the surface or allow them to touch the sides of the boats, and the whole operation was so perfectly performed that not even the boys in the canoe could hear the least sound to indicate that Bill was with them.

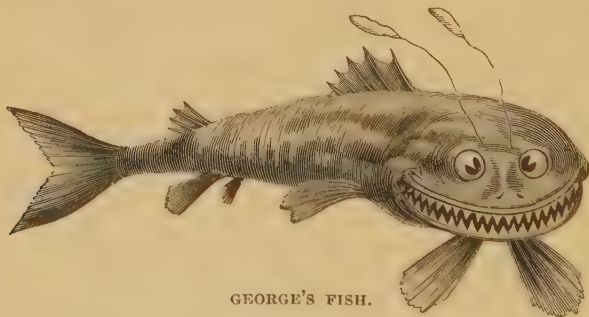
Nearer and nearer to the buck went the skiff. The animal became suspicious, and paused to look at the light that came streaming over the water. His alarm ceased for a moment, and he renewed his feeding, which gave Jim an opportunity to approach more nearly. Again the buck raises his head, and this time he throws back his horns and gazes

more earnestly than before. There is danger near, and he thinks it well to flee, but, with the curiosity peculiar to all members of the deer family, he will have another look at the strange light.

Now is the Doctor's chance—now or never, as the deer will be gone in another moment. The rifle is raised, and the next instant the echoes of the lake are awakened by the report. The shot was well aimed, and the buck has fallen in the water.

The stillness was ended with the report of the rifle. Jim drops his paddle and resumes the oars, and he pulls with all his might to where the pride of the forest is struggling in the water. Bill dashes forward with the canoe, and comes in on one side of the deer, while Jim approaches on the other. Jim draws his knife and cuts the throat of the struggling animal, and in a few minutes the deer has been transformed to venison.

It is no light work to get their prize into the skiff, and the united efforts of the party are needed to accomplish it. Jim and Bill are out in the water, which is less than three feet deep, but the Doctor and the boys keep their places in their respective boats. They secure their prize at last and are off for the camp, and the silence that was maintained in the time of the hunt is fully atoned for by the shouts and peals of laughter that sound and resound over the waters. The boys are jubilant over their first deer-hunt; Bill tells them they behaved handsomely in following his directions and keeping perfectly still, and he is confident they will



GEORGE'S FISH.

make the kind of hunters of which the Adirondacks will be proud. It is arranged that they will have a hunt on their own account at the first opportunity; and with lively anticipations of the time when they can bring down their first deer, they are soon asleep on their beds of boughs.

The whole party slept till a late hour, as they had been thoroughly fatigued with the journey to camp and the excitement of the hunt on the lake. In the afternoon they "stirred up the trout," as Jim expressed it, and had a fine haul for the frying-pan. While in the middle of the lake,

Jim lowered a line to the bottom, and said he would show the boys one of the queerest fish they had ever seen, and not half as handsome as the trout.

In a little while there was a tug at the hook. Jim gave the line to George and told him to haul in. George drew away, and soon there came before his astonished gaze a remarkable product of the water. It had a mouth of 'enormous proportions, and Harry thought the fish could go down his own throat without much trouble, and with no great strain on his jaws. It had horns, and was black as a coal, and its general get-up was by no means prepossessing. Jim said it was a cat-fish, peculiar to the lakes, and over where the tourists were thickest they sometimes palmed these fish on strangers for genuine lake trout.

"There was a man here one summer," said Jim, "who was half dead when he came to the Adirondacks, and he was green as he was feeble. He'd never been in the woods before, and when he first came he'd swallow anything. We had him out the first afternoon to catch cat-fish, under pretence that they were trout, and he hauled in a dozen and took 'em round to the hotel in great triumph. He had some of 'em fried for supper, but he was disappointed in the taste, which seemed to him a trifle too muddy for trout. Next morning he found how he'd been sold, and was mad for awhile, but he got over it in an hour or so, and laughed as heartily as anybody about the joke.

"They called him 'Judge,' but why, I don't know, as he was the worst judge of fish I ever saw; but he wasn't ashamed to learn, and every day he was out on the water or tramping in the woods. In a month he knew every fish in the waters, and he had made an acquaintance with two or three deer by shooting at 'em, though he didn't bring one of 'em



THE JUDGE GOING TO THE ADIRONDACKS.

down. But what was more, he got his health back, and was gay as a bird after the first week here. He hired me to go with him all summer. I thought I'd have an easy time of it when I looked at him, but he really gave me the liveliest season I ever had, as he wasn't quiet an hour at a time, but always wanting to go somewheres.

"There was a friend of his called the 'Professor,' who was a great fisherman, only he could never stand the flies. The flies could stand him a great deal better than he could them; they used to hover round him pretty much all the time, and the more he didn't like 'em the more they'd buzz and make him unhappy. He was a comical object when a fly'd light on his nose, and he'd look through his specs and twist his lips up as though he'd like to close 'em on the fly and make an end of him. He was about as healthy a specimen as the Judge before the season was over, and I'm sure the summer in the Adirondacks did him ever so much good.



THE JUDGE AFTER A MONTH IN THE ADIRONDACKS.

"The professor was a great joker in his way, and used to put up harmless pranks on the other members of the party. One day he got a deer-skin that had been stuffed by some tourist and left in the hotel till the owner could send for it. The professor had it carried out on the sly and taken over the lake, and then the next day he managed to get the judge over there on a deer-hunt. Of course the judge took a shot at the stuffed skin, and then, as the animal didn't move, he fired again to make sure of bringing him down. Of course the laugh was on him, but he got even with the professor before the day was out.



THE PROFESSOR.

"When they came back they took a turn among the trout, and each of 'em caught a handsome specimen. The judge thought his was a trifle the heaviest, and the professor thought the same of his own fish. So they made a bet on the weight of the fishes, and the loser was to pay for the suppers at the hotel.

"When the fishes were weighed, the judge's was found to be half an ounce heavier than the professor's. The professor paid for the suppers accordingly, and when it was all over he said,

"'I might as well own up, judge, that I tried to cheat you; but your fish was the heaviest after all.'

"'Is that so?' the judge asked.

"'Yes, I own up, judge, that I tried to play it on you, and was beaten. I thought my fish might possibly be a grain or so lighter than yours, and so I crowded four bullets down his throat while we were on the way home.'

"'I thought the same thing about mine, professor, and so I put seven bullets down his throat,' says the judge; 'and if you rip him open you'll find 'em.'

"They ripped the fishes open, and sure enough there were the bullets just as the two of 'em had said. It was a case of diamond cut diamond, and the judge said he'd call it square for shooting at a stuffed deer.

"We had a funny time one night in that same camp," the guide continued. "A lot of bottled beer had been brought up in the boat, and

one of the gentlemen wanted some in the course of the evening. The bottles were in a bag, and one of the guides—an old fellow they called Jake—said he'd go down to the boat and bring up bag and contents. Off he went in the dark, and soon we heard an explosion that sounded like a dozen pistols.

“We couldn't imagine what had happened, and we went down to the



JAKE AND THE BEER.

landing in double-quick time. Half-way there we saw a sight that was worth a dollar to look at.

“There was old Jake sprawled over a log, with his coat-tails caught on the limb of a tree. The bag was on another limb, and there were streams of fizz and froth coming out of it in a dozen places. Jake was scared out of his wits, and his hair stood up like a porcupine's quills; he couldn't tell what had happened, and all he knew was that he took the bag on his back and started for camp, and of a sudden the bag busted. He said he was thrown into the tree by the force of the explosion, and was covered all over with froth. Then we saw how it was: the weather was warm that day, and the beer had been shaken up a good deal on the way. It had ‘worked’ under the heat and shaking, and was all ready to

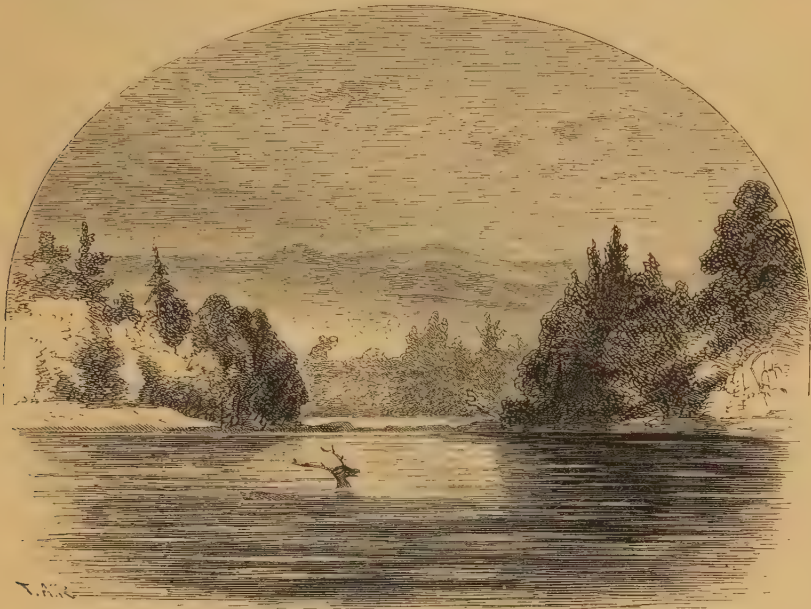
burst when Jake picked it up. This final shaking was too much for it, and when one bottle went off the others followed suit.

In the evening the boys went out in the skiff with Bill, leaving the Doctor and Jim at the camp. Bill said it was necessary to make an early start, as they would not be likely to find any deer at the hunting-ground of the previous evening, and he proposed going to a small lake connected with the one where they were. They were off a couple of hours before sunset, and it was Bill's plan to pass to the smaller lake before dusk, and then rest till the proper hour in the evening for the hunt.

As they neared the end of the lake Harry saw something moving in the water some distance ahead of them, and called attention to it.

"A deer, as I'm alive!" said Bill; "perhaps we can get a shot at him."

Bill threw his whole strength to the oars, and pulled as though he was a champion rower in a boat-race. He steered the boat so as to intercept the deer just as he would reach the land, and told the boys to get ready for a shot at him.



THE DEER SWIMMING THE LAKE.

A rifle and a shot-gun comprised the arms of the youths, and they were made ready for business. The small shot in the gun were drawn, and some heavy buck-shot took their place.

The deer saw the boat coming; he saw danger confronting him, and stopped, as if uncertain whether to go on or turn back. His delay brought the boat nearer, and rendered his capture more certain than before. If he had kept straight on he would have had a good chance of escape, as it required all the force of Bill's powerful arm to come within shooting distance before he reached the land, and his feet would be touching the firm earth at the instant the boys would fire their shot. If it failed, he would be out of their sight in half a dozen bounds.

Harry took the shot-gun, and gave the rifle to George. Bill told them to hold their fire till he slackened the speed of the boat, and rendered their aim as certain as he could. The deer redoubled his efforts, but to no purpose, and the boat was within twenty yards of him before he could touch the shelving shore of the lake.

Bill slackened speed, and thus steadied the boat; then he told George to fire with the rifle, and take good aim before he pulled the trigger. George fired, and the deer gave a convulsive jump half out of the water; then he fell back, and renewed his swimming toward the shore.

"You've hit him," said Bill, "but you didn't finish him. Now, Harry, give him the shot-gun."

Harry did as he was instructed, and the shot was fatal. It was delivered at a distance of not more than ten or twelve yards, and was well aimed. Bill brought the boat along-side with a few strokes of the oars, and the prize was secured. It was a medium-sized buck, with well-developed antlers, and his body was in fine condition.

"Shall we go on now, and have a trial of fire-hunting, or shall we take our deer home to camp?" Bill addressed this question to the boys, and waited for their answer before taking up the oars again.

The youths debated the question for a few minutes, and came to a very sensible conclusion. They had enjoyed the sensation of shooting a deer, and each had taken part in the sport. They had more than enough venison for their use in camp, and it would be a waste to kill more and risk the necessity of throwing any of it away. Bill was no doubt somewhat tired with his exertion in rowing the boat during the chase, and their own nerves might not be altogether steady enough for a night hunt. They would let the deer alone for that evening, and be content with what they had done.

But they were so near the end of the lake, that Bill took them to see the passage before going back to camp. The ground was marshy, and it was necessary to propel the boat with a pole for two or three hundred yards. There had been a log directly across the passage, but some of the

woodmen had cut a way through it sufficiently wide to permit the passage of a boat. From this opening they could look through to the small lake



PASSAGE BETWEEN THE LAKES.

where they had intended hunting the deer, but which they had decided not to invade.

They paddled leisurely back to camp, and when within a mile or so of their destination, Bill fired a couple of shots in rapid succession to inform Jim of their return, and to intimate that a supper would not be refused by the young hunters and himself.

CHAPTER XV.

OFF FOR THE WEST.—INDIAN VILLAGES AND DOG TOWNS ON THE PLAINS.

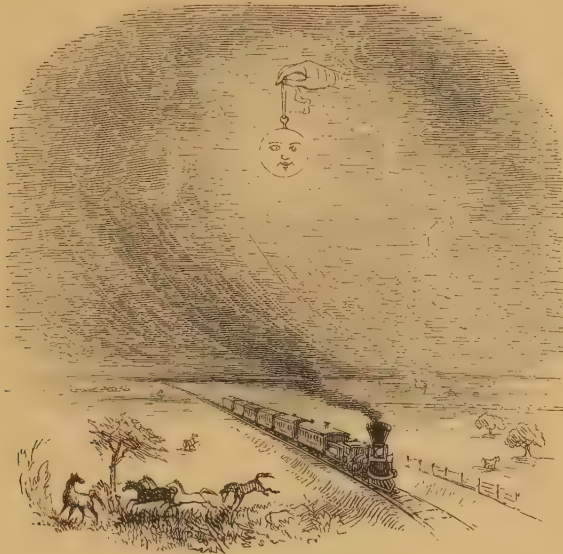
AFTER spending a week on the shores of Crystal Lake, and exploring the region around it, the party returned to Mrs. Fisher's. The boys had their deer-hunt at night, and were successful in bagging a good specimen. As before, the honors of the chase were divided between them, since a shot was required from each youth to secure the prize. Time passed rapidly, and almost before they were aware of it their month in the Adirondacks came to an end, and the Doctor announced their speedy return to the city.



THE RUSH FOR THE WILDERNESS.

They came out from their retreat in the backwoods, and took the route for the haunts of civilization. They met scores of travellers on their way to the mountains, and realized the full force of Jim's prediction that the Adirondacks would soon be so overrun with summer visitors that there would be two hunters for every deer in the mountains, and a fisherman for every trout in the streams and lakes.

The return journey was made by way of Plattsburg and Lake Champlain, the steamer bringing them to Whitehall, where they took the rail-



WESTWARD BY RAIL.

way for New York. The boys went back to their studies with the same vigorous health they had brought from the pine-forests of Maine the previous winter, and the Doctor tarried awhile in the metropolis before taking his departure for his old resort on the banks of the Kennebec, where we first met him.

Another and a longer and more exciting hunting experience was planned for the following year. "I will let you know all about it before we start," said the Doctor, "and while you are occupied with your books I will make all the necessary arrangements. We will go West next time, and the extent of our journey will depend upon circumstances."

True to his promise, the Doctor was on hand at the appointed time. He had made all arrangements, and one morning the three adventurers were on their way to the West in a Pullman car on the Erie Railway.

Harry thought it would be a good thing if they could keep the car all through their journey, and live in it while hunting bears and buffaloes; but George rejected the proposal, and said a hunter must expect to rough it, and the luxury of a Pullman car was hardly in keeping with a sportsman's life. Harry blushed at the mere suspicion that he really wished what he had proposed, and when he had cleared his conscience the subject of conversation was changed.

Westward and westward they held their way till they reached the banks of the Missouri River at Omaha. There the Doctor called a halt, and said their experience of the plains would begin.

"Perhaps we'll start from here," said the Doctor, "and perhaps we'll go farther west to get fairly among the wild animals that we wish to encounter. I can tell better when I have seen a gentleman I expect to meet here. The plains begin on the banks of the Missouri, but we won't find much game in this neighborhood. The settlement of the country is going on with great rapidity, and every year the extent of the hunting-ground is reduced.

The Doctor was not long in finding his friend and obtaining the information he sought. The plan of the campaign was speedily arranged; the last necessities of the outfit were procured in the shops and stores of Omaha; and the Doctor told his young companions that they would take the next train for the West.

They did as arranged, and while the train carried them along the banks of the Platte River, and over the plains of Nebraska, the plan of the wild life they were about to experience was unfolded to them.

"We will halt at South Platte Crossing," said the Doctor, "and there we will join an expedition that is going into the buffalo country. You will learn how to rough it on the plains, as you will sleep on the ground at night, and will be tired enough to care nothing for spring beds and fine carpets. You will go hungry once in a while for the sake of variety, and it is not impossible that you may wish yourselves back at home before you have had a week's experience of camping out. There will be a good deal of excitement to the square mile, and also a good deal of fatigue."

At South Platte Station they left the train and went to the hotel, but only for a few hours. The party they were to join was in camp about two miles away, and, as it would start in the morning, it was thought best for our friends to pass the night in one of the tents rather than remain in the hotel.

Bright and early the camp was a scene of activity. Drivers were

feeding their teams and getting the harnesses ready; the cooks were busy with preparations for breakfast; blankets were folded and stowed in the wagons; the loads of the wagons were arranged; riding-horses were saddled; and just as the sun was fairly above the horizon the order was given to move, and no sooner was it given than it was obeyed.

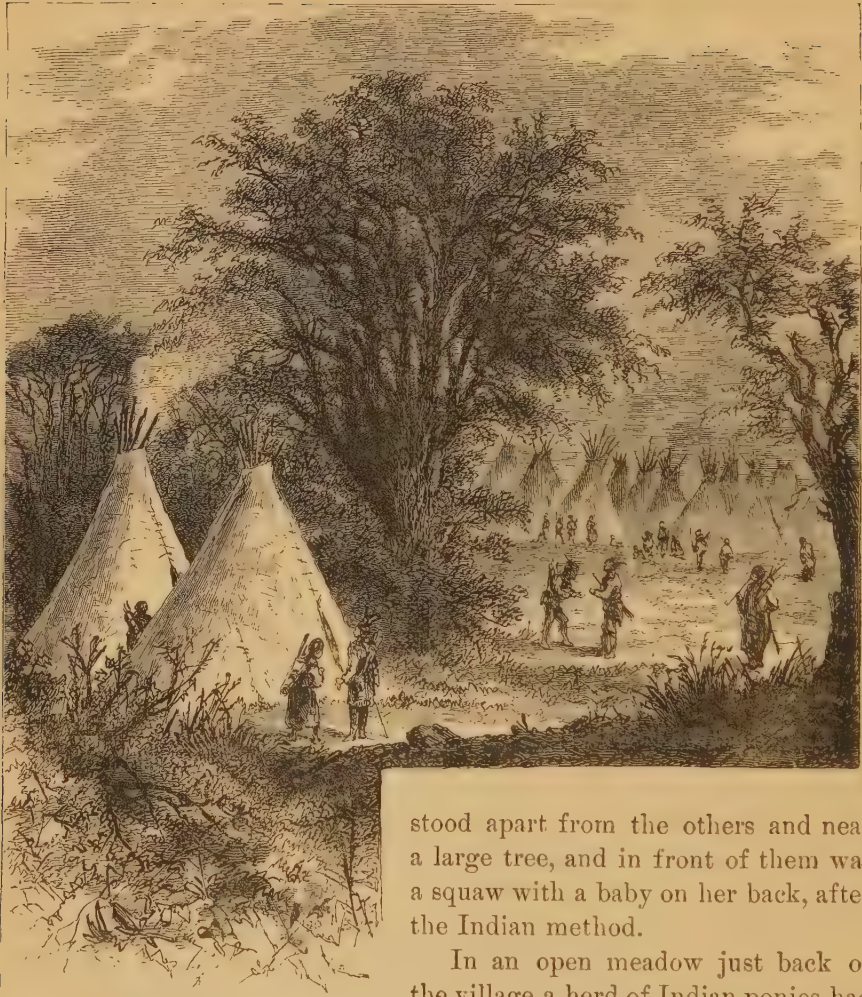
The expedition consisted of a small party of army officers and their friends, with the necessary accompaniments of drivers and camp assistants and all the needed outfit for a campaign in the buffalo land. The Doctor's friend had arranged that he and the youths should be included, and he had telegraphed for hiring the necessary wagons, teams, and saddle-horses, and making the proper purchases for their participation in the excursion. One wagon was specially devoted to our three friends, and it was arranged that the boys could take their choice from time to time of riding in the vehicle or exercising their skill in horsemanship.

"Hurrah for the buffaloes!" said Harry, as the wagons filed out from camp and moved along the road.

George echoed the hurrah, and added one for the first shot they would have at the huge game.

A few miles from camp they passed an Indian village, and some of the inhabitants came out to look at the wagon-train, and possibly to speculate on the chances of making a night attack and capturing the horses. One of the officers rode into the village, and invited the boys to accompany him, and we may be sure they did not hesitate a moment in accepting. The village was pleasantly situated among some trees on the bank of a small creek, so that the Indians had all the shade and water they could desire. The lodges were constructed of poles and buffalo hides—the poles being arranged so as to enclose a circle, and meeting at the top, where they were held together by a band of rawhide. The framework thus formed was covered with hides sewed together. An opening was left at the top for the escape of the smoke, and another in the side served as a door.

The officer led the way inside one of the lodges, and the boys followed. There was not much to be seen there, and the place was so filled with smoke from a fire that burnt in the centre of the floor that the eyes of the visitors were affected to tears. The usual custom among the Indians is to make a fire on the ground in the middle of the lodge, and let the smoke get out the best way it can. The most of it goes through the opening already described, and the balance mixes with the enclosed air, and is anything but agreeable to a stranger unaccustomed to live in a smoky atmosphere. Two tents belonging to the chief and his family



AN INDIAN VILLAGE.

stood apart from the others and near a large tree, and in front of them was a squaw with a baby on her back, after the Indian method.

In an open meadow just back of the village a herd of Indian ponies had been turned out to feed. Some of the animals were in fine condition, while others were thin in flesh, and seemed to have just arrived from a long march. The officer gave a quick glance at them, and said the Indians had recently come in from a buffalo-hunt, and their ponies showed signs of rough usage. They would be likely to remain for a week or two where they were, to give the animals a chance to recuperate.

Indian ponies have a hard life to lead. They are badly fed and badly treated, and it is proverbial that the red men are the worst masters in the world in their treatment of horse-flesh. When on the march or in the

hunt, they frequently ride their animals to death, and if a pony gives out his owner deserts him without the slightest compunction. In winter the ponies get very thin, and are quite useless so far as any service is concerned; in summer they grow fat, and by the time the autumn hunts begin they are in fine condition. Then the Indians go out on their chase after the buffalo, and by the time it is over the animals have lost most of their vigor. In midsummer they go occasionally on desultory hunts, but the grand chase of the season is in the autumn.



INDIAN PONY IN SPRING.



INDIAN PONY IN AUTUMN.

The wagon-train did not stop at all in the neighborhood of the village, and consequently the visit our friends made to the lodges of the noble red men was very brief. They rode back to the train, and, as the boys had had an exciting hour of it, they were quite willing to take their places in the wagon for a short rest.

They were reclining in their seats, discussing what they had seen, when they heard the Doctor's voice calling to them. Putting their heads from under the canvas cover, they had what Harry denominated a "moving spectacle." It was an Indian village on the move, and in their young eyes the picture was full of novelty.

It was evidently a village of no small importance, as the procession was a long one, and extended over the hills as far as the boys could see. In changing their residences, the Indians put the coverings of their lodges into bundles, and enclose with them the few spare garments and other property they may possess. The poles that make the framework of the tent are fastened to the ponies in much the same position that the shafts of a carriage are attached to a civilized horse; the bundles are then piled on the lower extremities of the poles, and in this way they are securely and easily carried. Babies and sick people are transported in the same way; and sometimes a basketful of dogs may be seen riding very comfortably on this wagon without wheels. The squaws ride on the backs of the ponies or walk by their sides, and the "bucks," or men, are mounted on their own hunting-steeds, and pay no attention to the rest of the party further than to keep near them.

The Indian men do none of the work about the village, but leave everything for the women. When a village is to move, the chief gives



AN INDIAN VILLAGE MOVING.

the order, and the men either lie around doing nothing, or mount their horses and ride on ahead. The lodges are struck, and the ponies harness-

ed and burdened by the women, and when the destination is reached the women set the tents up again. A noble Indian scorns to do any work, and looks upon his wife or wives as destined by nature for all the drudgery. There is no more degraded being in the world than an Indian woman, and it is a great compliment to her patience that she performs without complaint the tasks that her cruel master sets for her. She is



PREPARING BUFFALO-ROBES.

kicked and beaten and abused in every possible way, and one of the favorite amusements of the Indian is to set the squaws to fighting, and flog them if they do not tear each other's faces and hair with sufficient vigor; and yet few of these women will give up their wild life and accept the comforts of a civilized existence.

When the buffalo-hunts are over, the women are set to work cleaning the hides of the slaughtered animals, and making them ready for market or for the coverings of lodges. It takes from ten to twelve hides to cover a lodge, and the hair must be scraped off, and the skin rubbed with a stone fastened in a stick till it is soft and pliable. When the hunt is successful, the squaws are engaged for weeks in the preparation of the robes, and the

wealth of an Indian is generally estimated in robes rather than in any other kind of currency.

The train halted for a short rest at noon, and when it moved on, the boys mounted their horses and rode with the officers and others at the head of the column. In a little while they came in sight of a scaffold on poles, and supporting a bundle wrapped in a buffalo-robe. Harry was the first to see it, and he naturally inquired what it was.

"That's an Indian grave," said the Doctor.

"An Indian grave!" Harry exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Yes, an Indian grave," was the reply. "This is the way the Indians dispose of their dead. They erect a scaffold, and place the body upon it, wrapped in a robe that was once the property of the deceased. In addition to this, they leave sufficient food, clothing, arms, ammunition, and other things to give him a proper equipment for the happy hunting-grounds where he is expected to go, and sometimes the property found in an Indian grave is of considerable value. The Indians complain that the whites desecrate their burial-places by carrying away everything that has been left for the benefit of the dead men, and certainly they have good



AN INDIAN GRAVE.

reason for complaint. Where there are groves of trees, the bodies are placed among the branches sufficiently far from the ground to be out of reach of wolves. The whites cut down the trees for fuel, and thus destroy the burial-places and scatter the bones on the ground. It is not at all surprising that the Indians should make war on the men who thus interfere with their customs and traditions, and a good many men have lost their lives in consequence."

In contrast to the Indian grave there was another, a few miles farther on, containing the remains of a white man. There was no name upon the board at the head. The words, "Unknown, killed by Indians," had been scratched upon it by some kindly hand, and there was nothing to tell when or how the occupant of the lonely burial-place met his death. Hundreds of such graves are scattered over the plains and through the mountain regions of the Far West, and the path of civilization has been in too many instances the march of death.



"UNKNOWN."

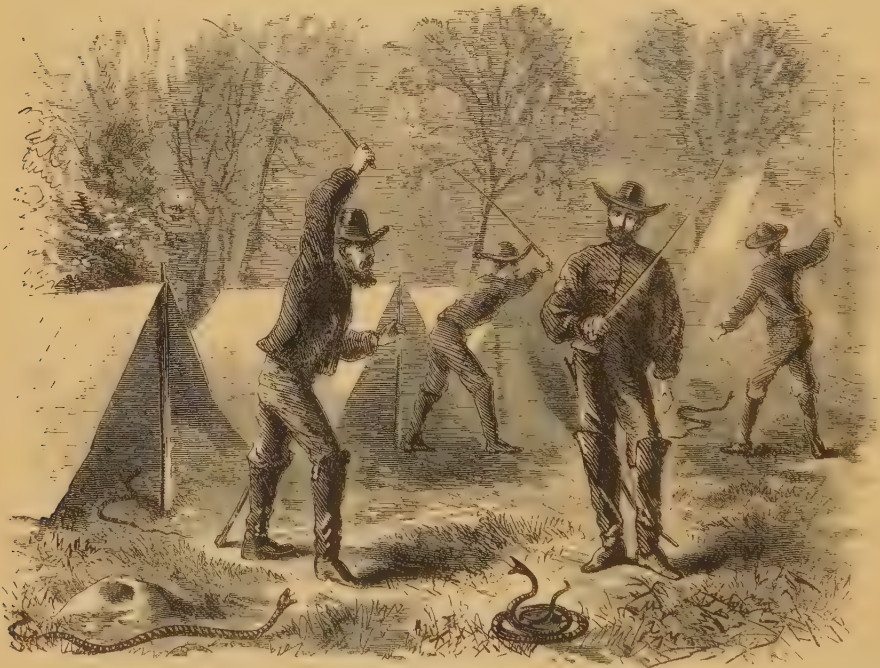
The camp was formed late in the afternoon, in a small grove of trees on the bank of a little creek. Hardly were the tents pitched before it was discovered that they had fallen upon an inhabited spot, and the rightful occupants were inclined to resent the intrusion. They were neither human nor quadruped, but belonged to the race of creeping things, and their names were "rattlesnakes."

The men of the party set to work to slaughter every snake that showed itself. The sport was not as dangerous as might appear at first glance, as everybody was equipped with boots reaching to the knee. The snake cannot strike much more than a foot above the ground, and so their enemies were in no danger as long as they stood erect. One of the officers was an expert swordsman, and amused himself by slicing off the heads of the rattlers as they rose up to strike. No record of the slaughter was kept, and the boys were quite content to look on from a distance and let the others have all the fun. One of the cooks prepared a dish that he designated as "prairie eels;" but it did not meet with much favor among the gentlemen, and as for the boys, they avowed a decided preference for fried bacon. The camp was afterward known as "Rattlesnake Village;" and the Doctor told the boys that the rattlesnake abounds all over the Western plains, and is frequently found congregated in large numbers.

Scouts had been sent out in advance to find where the buffalo herds were feeding. They came in during the evening and reported small groups of buffaloes about twenty miles away, and large herds somewhat

farther to the south. It was decided that the march should be kept up till the large herds were reached, as the scattered groups were very shy and difficult of approach, and, besides, they were so few that they could not be chased to advantage.

The march was resumed early in the morning, and a little while after leaving camp the boys made a new discovery, and one far more pleasing than the finding of the rattlesnakes. They came upon a "dog-town," as it is called in the language of the plains. Far as they could see, the country was inhabited, and very densely too.

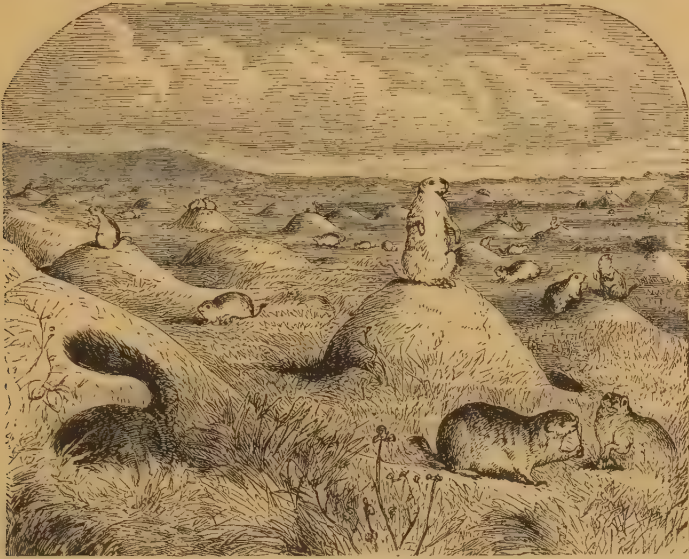


RATTLESNAKE VILLAGE.

The town consisted of numberless little hillocks or mounds, and on nearly every mound there was an animal of nearly the proportions of a medium-sized cat. He was a short, chubby little fellow, and he sat bolt-upright like a squirrel; he made a sound like the barking of a small dog, and from this circumstance the early explorers of the plains called him the "prairie-dog," and he has been so designated ever since.

When the boys approached the village they were greeted with the barking above described, and then the owner of the voice threw his heels in the air and disappeared in his den. The boys were greatly amused

at the comical way in which the little fellows turned somersaults as they went below, and they were further interested to learn that the prairie-dog



A PRAIRIE-DOG TOWN.

has the power of throwing himself into his hole so quickly that he is very hard to shoot.

"I have fired at them," said the Doctor, "when I was not more than ten yards away, but I could see no indications that I had harmed them. As my gun flashed they went down, and that was the last I saw; and even when mortally wounded they will throw themselves inside their retreats. I have shot at them, and found their brains scattered over the top of the mound, but the game was in the ground, and out of my reach."

George wished to know what the little animal was. Did he belong to the dog family, or was he so called erroneously on account of his bark?

"As to that," the Doctor answered, "he is no dog at all; he is a rodent, and occupies a middle position between the marmot and the prairie-squirrel. His scientific name is *Cynomys ludovicianus*, and he has a body about thirteen inches long, to which we may add four inches for the tail. He lives entirely on vegetable food, and, as the dog-towns are often far from water, it is generally believed that he does not need that liquid or any other to keep him alive. Sometimes the dog-towns extend continuously for many miles, and they are dangerous to buffalo-hunters, as horses

running rapidly among them are in danger of being thrown by getting their feet in the holes."

Harry asked if the flesh of the animal was good to eat.

"Certainly it is," the Doctor answered; "it is rich, tender, and juicy, and you must look far to find anything more delicious. Many persons refuse to eat it on account of its canine appellation, but I have no such prejudice, and if we can capture some of the inhabitants of a dog-town I hope to prove to you what a fine article of food is rejected by so many on account of its name."



CAMP SCENE AT NIGHT.

CHAPTER XVI.

INCIDENTS OF THE MARCH.—ARRIVAL AT THE HUNTING-GROUNDS.

THERE was nothing of special interest in the day's journey. The country they traversed was an undulating region, broken here and there by gullies and water-courses. The latter seemed to be misnamed, as few of them contained any water; but there was abundant evidence that torrents flowed through them in the rainy season. The Doctor told the boys that the rise of the streams in this part of the country was often as sudden as the approach of a tornado, and as destructive in its effects. "It is the rule of all plainsmen," said he, "never to camp on the bank of a stream, and leave it to be crossed in the morning. It may be a little thread of water at sunset, and a roaring torrent at sunrise the next day, and, by neglecting to make their crossing before camping, many verdant travellers have lost days in waiting for a stream to become passable. Sometimes a flood comes so suddenly that persons are caught in the bed of a stream and drowned.

"Denver City," he continued, "is at the junction of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek. The latter is dry for more than three-fourths of the time, and there have been entire years when not a drop of water was seen in it. Some of the early settlers built their houses on the dry bed of the creek, and the first newspaper of Colorado, the *Rocky Mountain News*, had its office there. The old trappers, who knew the habits of the stream, predicted that these buildings would be swept away some day; but for more than a year there was no indication of a flood, and the trappers were regarded as false prophets.

But once in the middle of the night there came a rushing sound as of a great river, and following the sound a huge wall of water came pouring down the valley. The occupants of the buildings managed to escape with their lives and a little clothing, but the houses went down as though constructed of snow. Very little was saved from the newspaper office. One of the printing-presses was carried three or four miles down the Platte River, and another, the largest and heaviest in the establishment, was

never found. In twelve hours after the coming of the flood, the bed of the creek was as dry as before, but no one ventured to build there again. A water-spout had burst among the hills where Cherry Creek takes its



EFFECTS OF A SUDDEN FLOOD.

rise, and filled the valley to its entire width. Similar phenomena are observed on other streams on the plains, and the men who are familiar with them are accustomed to treat the tiny creeks with the greatest respect.

Indications of their approach to the buffalo country began to be apparent. Occasionally the skull of a buffalo, bleached by the sun and rain, lay on the ground, and when they went into camp at night, the boys heard the order given to gather some buffalo-chips for making a fire. Their curiosity was roused, and one of them asked what buffalo-chips were.

"They are the dried excrement of the buffalo," the Doctor answered, "and they make excellent fuel. They are abundant on the feeding-grounds of the animals we are seeking, and, after lying a year in the sun, they burn like the best of peat."

As they formed the camp, one of the men started out with a sack, and in a little while returned with a bushel or more of the articles in question. The boys watched the building of the fire, and realized the correctness of the Doctor's statement. The new fuel burnt into a bright coal with very little smoke, and by passing their hands above it they realized that there was all the heat needed for the ordinary purposes of cooking. There was not the least disagreeable smell arising from the fire, and altogether the chips appeared preferable to wood for the uses of prairie travellers.



GATHERING BUFFALO-CHIPS.

When supper was ready, the party broke up into groups of four or five, and the meal was eaten in the open air, with no table-cloths, and not even a table to place them on. As a precaution, the guns were brought out and kept in readiness, as the scouts reported Indians in the vicinity, and there was no knowing when a rush might be made upon them. The animals had been turned out to graze, and a watch was set over them to prevent a stampede.

The latter word was new to the boys. The Doctor saw the look of inquiry on their faces, and explained what a stampede was.

"There is a great deal of humanity about the horse," said the Doctor,



A SUNSET SUPPER.

"and particularly in the matter of taking fright. The Indians take advantage of this failing, and have invented a way of robbing emigrants of their horses and other stock that has been turned out to graze. Horse-stealing is looked upon by the Indians as a perfectly honorable occupation, and the best man in a tribe is the one who has stolen more horses than anybody else. Nearly every man of long experience in travel on the plains has had his horses and mules stolen at some time or other, and when his means of transport are gone he considers himself fortunate not to be further molested.

"To show you what a stampede is, I will take a leaf out of my own experience.

"Some years ago, I was out with a small party on the head waters of the Republican River. We did not know there were any Indians in the vicinity, and when we put out our animals after unharnessing, we were not as watchful as we should have been.

"One evening, while we were getting supper, we suddenly heard a

shout as though all the Indians in the country were upon us. We looked up, and ran for our guns, but were too late.

"Three or four Indians were riding through our herd, yelling at the top of their voices, and waving strips of cloth in the air. Each of them carried a lance, and every lance-head had a red strip fluttering from it, which added to the picturesqueness of the performance.

"This was a regular stampede. It was over in a few minutes, and left us without a single horse or mule to help ourselves with. Our whole herd had taken fright, and joined the fleeing Indians, and when we last saw them the Indian horses and ours were scampering away together.

"A remarkable thing about a stampede is the effect on the tired and worn-out horses. A weary, spavined animal, out of which you can hardly



THE STAMPEDE.

get more than three miles an hour on the road, and who can barely stand when turned out to graze, will be as active as any other when stampeded. He throws his head in the air, and can keep up with the best of his companions, and sometimes he gets a little ahead. I have known a horse so old and worn as to be dear at five dollars who could take the lead in a stampede, and make a spectator believe he was the pride of a circus."

Supper was over before dark, and then the fire was carefully extinguished. Captain Bailey, who commanded the party, ordered the guards to be specially watchful over the animals, and, as a matter of precaution, they were driven up and picketed close to the camp. A long rope, called, in the parlance of the plains, a lariat, was attached to the neck or forefoot



THE WHITE MAN'S FRIENDS.

of each horse or mule ; the other end was fastened to an iron spike, or pin, and when this pin was driven into the ground so as to bury it to the head, it was next to impossible for the animal to break loose, or pull the pin from the solid earth.

Captain Bailey told the boys it was never a good plan to have a fire burning when Indians might be around. A fire showed them where the whites were camped, and it often happened that a man who exposed himself suddenly to the light would receive a bullet or an arrow as a reward for his indiscretion ; and, besides, the fire dazzles the eyes of the man who is near it, and obscures objects that otherwise he might easily perceive.

The guard was arranged so that there should be two men on duty for a couple of hours, and then they were relieved by two others. The watch was continued in this way through the night, so that everybody had a fair

chance for sleeping. Very early in the evening the camp was quiet, and the boys were just dropping to dream-land, when a howl saluted their ears that made them wide awake in an instant.

"What's that?" Harry asked, with his eyes as large as tea-saucers.

"I'm sure I can't tell," replied George. Then he paused, and listened again to the howling, and after satisfying himself that it was an animal of some kind, he settled back to his couch with the remark,

"Perhaps it's the wolves; anyway it can't be dangerous to us, as nobody else seems disturbed by it."

Harry thought this was a sensible conclusion, and followed George's example.

In the morning they learned that the noise they had heard was the howling of the coyotes, or prairie-wolves; and, somewhat to their surprise, they learned that the howling was a welcome sound to the plainsmen in camp at night, as it was a sure sign that no Indians were in the neighborhood. "As long as we hear the coyotes," said Captain Bailey, "we know there are no Indians sneaking about, and if the howling stops suddenly we smell danger at once. The coyotes are our friends, and their noise is music to our ears."

"They are great scavengers," said the Doctor, "and make short work of a dead horse or buffalo. They follow the herds of buffaloes, and pick off those that are wounded or otherwise disabled, but they rarely attack a buffalo in his full strength, as they are apt to get the worst of an encounter.

"They come around camps, hoping to pick up something when we move off, and in the late hours of the night they sneak inside and steal anything edible they can lay hold of. I have known them to pull a boot from under the head of a sleeping man, and carry it off for the sake of the grease upon it, and they once waked me by gnawing at the leather of my saddle. The least movement sends them scampering away, and the danger of their attacking an individual is almost nothing. After this, when you hear the coyotes howling, you may consider them as friendly sentinels who will warn us very promptly of the approach of thieving Indians."

An amusing incident occurred during the morning, and there was a hearty laugh all round at the hero of it. A negro servant of one of the officers was sent to the creek to water a horse belonging to his master. While the horse was taking his fill of water, the man saw what he supposed to be an Indian under a bush a dozen yards away.

Without stopping to investigate, he came dashing back to camp, and

yelled "Injuns! Injuns!" at the top of his voice. He did not draw rein till he reached the centre of the tents and wagons, and then his face was



BADLY SCARED.

as white as was possible for a negro's face to be. Of course every one was on the alert; the scared darkey was questioned as to the cause of his alarm, and it took several minutes to extract the facts from him.

Three or four of the party started in the direction where the Indians were reported. As they neared the creek a coyote was perceived leisurely surveying the scene, and doubtless wondering what had so startled the negro, and sent him flying to the camp. The wolf had been mistaken for an Indian. The frightened negro was not the first traveller over the plains who has fallen into this error.

The performance of the servant led to a story of the fright of an officer who had freshly arrived on the plains several years ago, and was roused one night by an alarm of Indians. His horse had been picketed among some trees close to the camp, and the owner rushed for his faithful steed, and mounted at once without waiting for saddle or bridle. The lariat was fastened to the animal's foot, but the rider forgot all about it,

and manifested his eagerness to go on by thrusting his spurs into the horse's sides to their full depth.

The horse thus urged bounded forward. When he reached the end of his tether he was brought up all standing, as a sailor would say, which means all falling. They went in opposite directions, the man plunging forward as though taking a dive in the water, and the horse throwing his heels wildly in the air. In falling, he came in front of a black stump and mistook it for the Indian that had knocked him down. He saw there was no chance of escape, and immediately fell on his knees and



UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER.

offered to surrender. The supposed Indian did not move, and as the officer finally gathered his wits together, he realized his mistake, unfastened his lariat, and soothed the excited horse till the scare was over.



A DUG-OUT ON THE PLAINS.

The march was resumed at the usual hour, and the order was issued for the party to keep well together, and not to stray from the line of travel without permission. Captain Bailey was unwilling to have the hunting begin till they were well among the buffaloes, and, besides, some of the stragglers might fall into the hands of the Indians, who were supposed to be close on the trail of the buffaloes.

In the afternoon a few buffaloes were seen, but they were very shy, and fled long before the party came within rifle range. The march was kept up till sunset, as it was desirable to reach a certain creek, where the camp would be kept for several days if the herds remained in the vicinity. By the time the tents were pitched it was quite dark, and supper was taken under various disadvantages. George and Harry offered to take their share of standing guard over the animals, and the former was assigned to the first watch, while the latter went to the second.

There were various things to indicate that they were not the first visitors to that locality. Traces of previous camps were visible, and in the little bluff overhanging the valley of the creek there was a ruined and abandoned dug-out. The Doctor explained to the boys the character of this peculiar structure, which is the favorite abode of those who pass the winter on the plains.

It is nothing more nor less than a cave in a steep bank, with an opening for a chimney. It is an excellent contrivance for shunning the cold, and it makes a very good defence against Indians. A few men club together to construct it, and whenever danger is apprehended they take turns in mounting guard above the door. A fire in the interior drives

away the most of the dampness; and as the plainsmen are a hardy race, they generally come out in the spring in a good state of health.

The coyotes howled musically through the night, and gave a sense of security to all in the camp. In the morning there were active preparations for a hunt, as the buffaloes were said to be in large numbers only a few miles away. Rifles and pistols were carefully examined and loaded, ammunition was made ready to be handled with great rapidity, the saddles and their belongings were critically examined, and a dozen other details of a buffalo-hunt received the minute attentions that old sportsmen on the plains thoroughly understand. The boys looked on with great interest, and allowed few things to escape their observation.



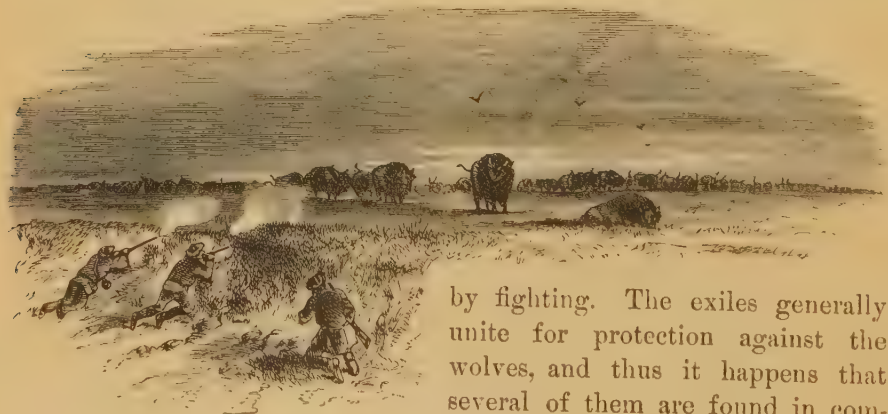
READY FOR THE HUNT.

CHAPTER XVII.

A DAY OF BUFFALO-HUNTING.

ONE of the scouts announced that there was a group of a dozen or more buffaloes on the bank of the creek about half a mile below the camp, and that a larger herd was visible some distance farther on. As there was an hour or more to spare before the general hunt would begin, Captain Bailey gave permission for the boys to go out with the Doctor and see what they could accomplish. They were off in a few moments, and by following the inequalities of the ground they succeeded in getting quite close to the group. Each of the trio carried a rifle, and it was arranged that the boys were to reserve their fire till the Doctor gave the word.

The buffaloes proved to be some old bulls that had been driven out of the main herd by the younger ones. It is a habit of the youngsters to drive out the veterans when they become unable to defend themselves

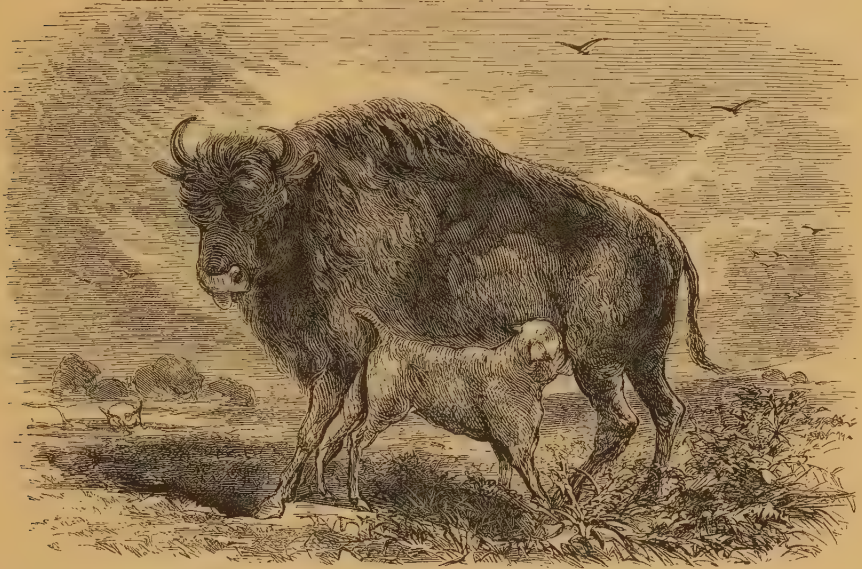


THEIR FIRST BUFFALO-HUNT.

by fighting. The exiles generally unite for protection against the wolves, and thus it happens that several of them are found in company, as on this occasion. The wolves follow on the skirts of a

herd in search of these waifs and strays, and evidently look on them as the provision of nature for their support.

The two foremost bulls of the group were selected by the Doctor as the recipients of their fire: he would try to bring down the nearest of them, while the boys could use their rifles on the second. He fired, and his buffalo fell with a shot through his shoulder; the boys discharged



BUFFALO COW AND CALF.

their rifles so nearly together that only one report was heard. The buffalo that was favored with their attentions staggered for a moment, gazing in the direction of his assailants, and then fell to the ground. The others scampered away toward the main herd, and left our friends to pick up their game. The tongue of each buffalo was cut out and taken back to camp. The Doctor explained that the tongue was the only edible part of an old bull, with the possible exception of the tenderloin. The hides were of no use, as nearly all the hair was worn away, and the little that remained was coarse and of poor color.

During their return to camp the Doctor gave the boys some information concerning the buffalo and its peculiarities, which was in substance as follows:

“The name of buffalo is erroneous; it should be bison, and the scientific appellation for the animal is *Bos Americanus*. Since he is popularly known as buffalo, we will not draw too fine a point about it, but continue to do as others are doing. It is believed that he once roamed over the whole of North America, from Lake Champlain and the Hudson River

to the Pacific Ocean, but it is many years since a buffalo in his wild state was seen east of the Mississippi River. The Missouri is now considered the eastern limit of the buffalo country, and this only in its northern portion. His range is diminishing every year, and, at the rate of decrease now going on, the whole race of buffaloes promises to be extinct by the end of this century.

"The buffalo travels northward in spring, and when the autumn comes his direction of travel is reversed. He is a gregarious animal, and the herds of buffaloes are sometimes of enormous extent; it is impossible to estimate them with any degree of accuracy. I have seen herds that might contain a million buffaloes, and I would not undertake to say there were less than two millions. Buffaloes move from one place to another in search of food. Their favorite sustenance is a rich and soft herbage known to plainsmen as 'buffalo-grass;' it grows in the valleys of the streams, and is very nutritious. Emigrants find it excellent for their draught and saddle animals, and as long as they can find it in abundance their teams are in good condition.

"Before they were disturbed by the advance of civilization, the buffaloes had regular routes of travel that they followed year after year. These were known as buffalo-trails, and it has been said that the lowest passes through the hills, and the shortest routes were always selected by the herds in their migrations. 'The buffaloes were the first road-makers and the best,' is an old saying among plainsmen.

"A great herd on the move is a dangerous thing to encounter. It is always led by the most powerful of the bulls, and the principle of 'follow



BREAKING THE HERD.

my leader' seems to be fully carried out by the buffalo. If the bulls can be divided, the herd will separate and move on like a river flowing around an island; but if they refuse to be divided, the herd rushes over the obstruction in the footsteps of its leaders.

"Sometimes wagon-trains and camping-parties have been overrun by them and destroyed, or the men were forced to seek safety in flight. I was once with a wagon-train that was only saved by firing into the herd as the leading bulls approached, and some of them actually got among the wagons before their advance was checked. The herd stretched at least half a mile on each side of us, and it was nearly nine hours in passing. Their tramp was like the roar of distant thunder, and they raised clouds of dust from the dry earth that at times almost enveloped them.

"A friend of mine once found himself in front of an advancing herd, and while he was trying to get away his horse caught a leg in a dog-hole and fell. The horse was so badly hurt that he did not try to rise, and perhaps it is just as well that he did not. My friend was not injured; he rose by the side of his fallen horse, and fired his pistol in the air just as the foremost bulls were within ten feet of him."

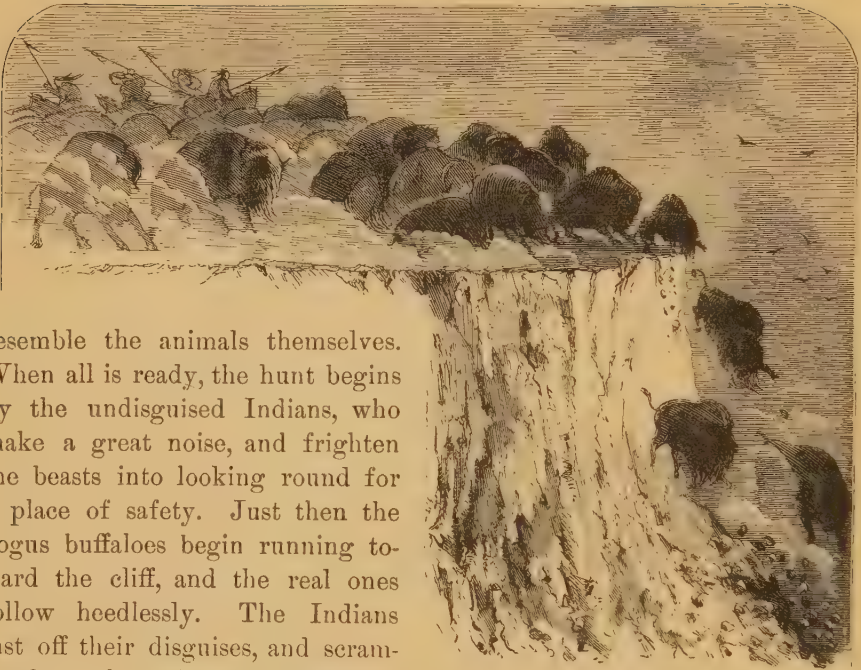
"Why didn't he fire at them instead of discharging his pistol in the air?" one of the boys asked.

"Because," was the reply, "it would have been certain death to do so. The buffalo is not particularly dangerous when he is let alone, but if he is attacked and wounded he is apt to turn on his assailant. If my friend had fired at one of the bulls he would have been gored and trampled underfoot in a moment, and the herd would have gone on straight over where he lay. When he fired the shot the bulls showed a disposition to open a way for him; they separated, and the herd followed their example. They united again in front of him, and he stood there like a living island in a living river for several hours. Not until the last of the herd had passed did he consider it safe to move.

"The buffalo is ordinarily an inoffensive beast. It is only when he is pursued or disturbed that he shows an inclination to fight, and even then he does not keep it up for a long time. He has a very fierce appearance, with his high shoulders, his shaggy mane, and his great, staring eyes, but he is less savage than he looks, and decidedly in favor of universal peace.

"The Indians take advantage of his tendency to follow a leader, and sometimes inflict great slaughter on a herd in consequence of it.

"When they find a herd near a precipice they lay their plans for driving the unhappy beasts over it. They surround it on three sides, while on the fourth there are several Indians disguised in buffalo-robcs so as to



DRIVING BUFFALOES OVER A CLIFF.

resemble the animals themselves. When all is ready, the hunt begins by the undisguised Indians, who make a great noise, and frighten the beasts into looking round for a place of safety. Just then the bogus buffaloes begin running toward the cliff, and the real ones follow heedlessly. The Indians cast off their disguises, and scramble down the cliff or into holes previously prepared. The buffaloes are driven over, and many are killed by the fall, or despatched by the Indians while limping off. White men rarely indulge in this form of hunting, particularly if they are only pursuing the buffaloes for the sake of sport. The slaughter is so great, and the hunters are so entirely free from danger, that the true sportsman would scorn such a method of taking his game."

By this time they were back in camp, where the boys were congratulated on the success of their first buffalo-hunt. It was announced that the hunting-party would start in a few minutes to chase the herd that had been seen down the valley, and the Doctor and the boys would accompany it. Through fear of accidents, it was arranged that the boys should not for that day take an active part in the hunt. They were to be on horseback like the rest, and the Doctor said they might carry their pistols, but they were not to do more with them than protect themselves from injury, or take a "pot-shot" in a good opportunity.

"You had better see how it is done," said the Doctor, "before you venture on hunting on your own hook; and, besides, the horses you have are not good buffalo runners like the one I am riding, and which I shall

lend to you alternately, provided another cannot be procured. Most horses are afraid of the buffalo when they first see him, and it requires careful training to fit a horse for the business. The best are those which have been brought up and trained by the Indians. They are known as buffalo-horses, and the Indians mark them with a small slit in each ear, so that they may be readily recognized. A first-rate buffalo-horse enters into the spirit of the chase quite as much as his rider does. He needs no guidance with the rein, and takes his place instinctively at the left side of a buffalo, and a little behind him. This gives the rider a chance to use his weapon, generally the revolver, with just the effect he desires, and the horse is guided entirely by the voice, and by the pressure of the foot against his side.

"When a shot has been delivered, the buffalo frequently turns and attempts to return the compliment with the best weapons he has—his horns. The horse understands this, and when he hears the report of your revolver he is on the alert for the expected charge, and takes the best position he can to avoid it. He goes to one side very quickly, but at the same time with such a motion that his rider is in no danger of being thrown



THE TRACK OF A HUNT.

unless by those dreaded dog-holes. While running a buffalo, he keeps about ten feet from the side of the beast, and thus you can fill your game with bullets without taking accurate aim, or really any aim at all."

This conversation, or rather soliloquy, occurred while the horses were being saddled. The word was given, and all who were to join in the



THE CAPTAIN AND HIS BUFFALO.

hunt were soon astride their steeds. Captain Bailey headed the party; and as he had the reputation of being one of the best hunters on the plains, the boys determined to keep as near him as possible, in order to learn all the points of successful buffalo-chasing.

A little distance from camp the party halted while the captain "tossed the feather;" that is, he threw a feather in the air to ascertain how the wind was blowing. This is a very important operation in buffalo-hunting, as the scent of the animal is very keen; and if he is approached from windward he takes alarm, and is off long before his pursuer is in the range of the best rifle ever made. A herd should always be approached from the leeward; and the same rule is observed with this lord of the plains as with the moose, the deer, and other game animals of the forest. The wind having been ascertained, the party circled round to get the proper position and approach as near as possible without being perceived. The configuration of the ground favored them, and they managed to arrive within a quarter of a mile of the herd before the latter suspected any danger. Then a dash was made, and in a very short time the hunters were in the midst of their game.

Each man singled out a buffalo, and went after him to the best of his ability. Captain Bailey selected the fattest animal he could find, and giving the reins to his powerful hunter, he was soon in the position he desired. Away they went, buffalo and horse, and the chase was neck and neck for nearly half a mile. The captain fired three bullets into the side of the buffalo before bringing him to earth, and as soon as he was sure of his prey he started for another. This he killed with a single shot, and in a run of less than three miles the captain was able to count four buffaloes as the result of his morning's work.

The majority of the best hunters prefer the old-fashioned army revolver, which throws a ball forty-four one-hundredths of an inch in diameter, and throws it with tremendous force. The pistol is easier to handle than the carbine, and it is impossible to take anything like accurate aim when riding at full speed on a wiry Indian pony; and, besides, you are so near your game that a close sight is not at all necessary, even supposing you could possibly draw a bead along the barrel of your weapon. For those who prefer a rifle the best thing is a Remington, or some other form of breech-loader, short in the barrel, and of large calibre, so that it will disturb the interior of a buffalo in the briefest possible time. A great many fancy rifles have been taken to the plains; they are pretty to look at, but not at all effective, as they have no powers of penetration, and are a source of amusement to the buffaloes as soon as they find out that their pursuers are thus armed.

It was an exciting scene. The boys and their good friend the Doctor soon lost sight of the captain, and the Doctor, bidding the boys be careful what they did, concluded he would have a shy at the herd on his own account. Of course he was quickly lost in the dust and confusion, and the boys were left to themselves.

From the brow of a ridge they looked down on the rushing buffaloes and their pursuers, and Harry said it did not require a great stretch of the imagination to transform the ground into a battle-field. Soon the herd moved away from the base of the ridge, raising a great cloud of dust, through which the figures of men and animals were but dimly seen. In a little while the cloud was so dense that only an occasional straggler could be outlined through it, and the prospect seemed excellent that they would be left far behind.

"It's no use, George," exclaimed Harry; "we can't stay here and see the buffaloes disappear and we not have a chance at them."

"Let's ride after them," said George, "and perhaps we can pick up one for ourselves."



VIEW FROM THE RIDGE.

Off they started, and soon came up with a year-old calf that seemed to be quite out of his head with the confusion. Harry drew his pistol to have a shot at the fellow, but George checked him before he could fire, and suggested that perhaps they could take their game in alive.

The proposal was accepted, and, as George afterward described the incident, they surrounded the calf by getting on opposite sides of him. Then they made a noose of a lariat from one of the horses, and with some difficulty secured it around the neck of the juvenile buffalo. He was obstinate, and at first refused to budge, but they soon convinced him that

he knew how to walk, and would save himself much trouble if he exercised his feet. Harry led him, while George followed and urged him from behind, and in this way they brought their game along in triumph.

The dust cleared away, and the scattered hunters began to return in the direction of camp. They had been followed by wagons to bring in the hides and the best of the meat, and our young friends had not gone far before they met one of the wagons, which had just completed its load and was turning back to camp. The driver and the men accompanying him volunteered to lead the calf behind the wagon, and accordingly he was surrendered to them, and in due time appeared at the tents.

The boys were in great glee over their buffalo-hunt, and the captain complimented them on the result of their day's work. "A bull and a yearling calf," said he, "are by no means a bad pair of prizes for your inexperience. I predict you'll do more next time, and perhaps you'll become the champion hunters of the plains before you have done with them."



VULTURE IN A MIRAGE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MORE BUFFALO-HUNTING.—ENCOUNTER WITH INDIANS.

THE afternoon was well advanced before the hunters were all back in camp. The rest of the day was passed in cleaning weapons and making preparations for an early start on the following morning, as it was thought the herd would move farther down the valley in consequence of the interference that had been made on their present grazing-



CAMP OF BUFFALO-HUNTERS.

ground. Everybody was in the best possible humor, and the early hours of evening were enlivened with stories of the plains which were not in all cases confined to a rigid statement of facts.

During the morning's ride the boys had observed occasional depressions in the ground, in the shape of basins about ten feet in diameter and perhaps eighteen or twenty inches deep. Harry asked what they were, and was informed that they were popularly known as "wallows," and were the work of the buffaloes.

In summer it frequently happens that the buffaloes become covered with vermin. Their skins are irritated by them, and the only way they have of ridding themselves of the unwelcome visitors is by rolling in the sand. Some persons think the rolling is intended to assist the removal of the hair when the animal is shedding his coat in the spring, and quite possibly this has something to do with it. Persons who claim to have seen the buffaloes at this amusement say that an old bull will often roll and twist about for a quarter of an hour, till every square inch of his skin has been thoroughly covered with dust. Sometimes he takes a roll just after a rain, when the wallow is partly filled with water; when he emerges from his mud bath he is quite unfit for an introduction to a fashionable ball-room. The soil of the plains is usually quite adhesive when wet, and a newly-rolled buffalo in the rainy season has a solid coating not less than an inch in thickness.

Captain Bailey told the youths that the wallows were often used as retreats by white men when attacked by Indians. Three or four men in a wallow, armed with rifles and revolvers, had been known to keep off ten times their number of howling savages for several hours.

The account of the uses the buffalo makes of the wallows called out a story from one of the party of the troubles of the telegraph on the plains before the construction of the railway. He said the buffaloes were fond of scratching themselves against trees, after the manner of domestic cattle, and sometimes large trees were rubbed down by them, and the stumps fairly worn away. "When the telegraph line was first built," said he, "the buffaloes used to rub against the posts and break down the line, and the interruptions from this cause were more frequent than any other.



THE TELEGRAPH PIONEER.

"The division superintendent between Fort Kearney and the Platte crossing was a good deal troubled by the buffaloes, and determined to fix them. He sent to Chicago for a thousand pounds of brad-awls, and had them stuck in the telegraph posts in the middle of the buffalo country. He chuckled at the astonishment of the buffaloes when they next came to rub against the posts and found their skins punctured by brad-awls.

"The first troop of bulls that came along stopped to have a rub. The leader took the place of honor, and at the very first scratch he felt an unusual sensation. There was a tingle along his spine and down to the very tip of his tail. It was like a taste of cayenne pepper to a man with a jaded appetite, or a new bonnet to a girl. Such a delicious scratch he had never known before, and he felt his thick hide glowing with the titillation.

"It was the custom among the buffaloes to have a few turns at the post—one after another; but this old bull found the pleasure so great that he forgot all the rules of etiquette, and continued to scratch as long as there was a brad-awl left. The others were mad about it, and there was a fight, as might be expected. All the rest turned on him and drove him away, and then they found out why the post was so attractive.

"The most of the brad-awls were broken off in their tough hides, but the stubs remained in the wood, and afforded some very fair scratching. They worked at that post till they had it flat on the ground, and then they went for the next.

"The news spread among the buffaloes that the white man was their benefactor, and had introduced a scratching system such as the world had never known. They left their grazing-grounds to try the new invention, and they did nothing but scratch till they had knocked down nearly two hundred miles of telegraph line. They would travel fifty miles to find a pole with a brad-awl in it, and there were some terrible battles among them for the first chance. That experiment cost the Company more than twenty thousand dollars, besides a great loss from the interruption of business while the line was down. They only stopped the scratching by getting a lot of cross-cut saws and fastening them perpendicularly in the posts, so that when a buffalo rubbed against it vigorously for a minute or so he would find himself sawed into two buffaloes. This was more than they could stand, and, after a few dozens had thus divided themselves, the balance concluded to let the telegraph posts alone."

"You'll have a nightmare for that story," said one of the listeners, as the party broke up and retired to their sleeping-places.

An hour later there was an outcry that brought everybody to his feet.

It came from the teller of the brad-awl story, who was sleeping near where the horses were tied up, and had appropriated a bag of oats for a pillow.



AN ATTACK OF NIGHTMARE.

He thought his scalp was being removed by a hostile Indian, and he yelled out for mercy; but the savage red man proved to be nothing more dangerous than one of the horses that had got free from his halter and was looking around for something to eat. He scented the oats and went for them, and in trying to take a mouthful he unintentionally seized the hair of the slumberer. Thereupon came the dream of the red man and his barbarities, and the consequent outcry that roused the camp.

As had been expected, the herd moved several miles down the valley, so that it took a ride of more than an hour to reach them. Two of the

hunters of the previous day did not care to go out, as one of them had injured his hand during the chase, and the other was suffering from a sprained ankle. They kindly loaned their horses to the boys; and as the animals were "split-ears" of the best character, there was a prospect that the buffaloes might feel the weight of bullets from the pistols of Harry and George. It was stipulated that they were not to make a long run, and each promised to be content if he killed a single buffalo. With this understanding they joined in the hunt.

The herd was found, and the usual preliminaries of learning the wind were accomplished. The race began as before, each rider singling out his animal and paying strict attention to it. The hunt lasted less than an hour, as it was not desired to kill too many of the buffaloes in a single day, and thus leave a lot of meat to rot on the ground or become the food of wolves. Captain Bailey and the gentlemen with him were inclined to set a good example to others, and not make needless slaughter for the mere sake of sport.

George was successful in bagging his buffalo, or, rather, in bringing it to the ground, as he did not happen to have any game-bag over his shoulder that would hold an animal of that size. His prize was a young cow, and it was pronounced one of the fattest of the herd.

Harry was less fortunate than George. He made the general mistake of a novice, and picked out an old bull—one of the fellows that would have been driven from the herd by the youngsters in the course of the season—and was not a valuable prize for a hunter. He could not run fast, and Harry had no difficulty in keeping up with him; but the beast was able to carry off a large quantity of lead without feeling it. Harry discharged the six barrels of his pistol into the buffalo's side with no greater effect than to make the old fellow shake his tail each time, as though he had been stung by a bee or a wasp. Then he took a pistol from the holster and gave him six more, as fast as he could deliver them. His shots were then exhausted, and though the bull was slackening speed he was not by any means used up. One of the gentlemen of the party happened along just then, and with a heavy bullet from a Remington carbine aimed directly at the buffalo's heart, the race was ended. Harry was laughed at for attacking an old bull that was of no use whatever except as food for the wolves, and his chief consolation was that he was by no means the first hunter who had done so.

While they were returning to camp, the sharp eyes of one of the men perceived an object that would have altogether escaped the attention of the boys. Even when they were told of it, they could not readily make it out.

"It's an Indian watching us," the captain said to Harry, who was riding at his side. "He belongs to some wandering hunting-party that is after the same herd we've been running, and he wants to know how many we are."

The only part of the Indian that could be seen was his head, and it disappeared as the captain spoke, and was seen no more. In a few minutes the party rose to the crest of a ridge and saw some Indians pursuing a buffalo that had become detached from the herd, and was doing his best to escape from his assailants.

There were three of the Indians, mounted on ponies, and armed with bows and arrows. The captain recognized them as Kiowas, one of the most warlike of all the tribes on the plains, and the active participants in many of the Indian troubles of the past twenty years.

The three Indians were riding rapidly at the side of the buffalo, and discharging their arrows into him at very short range. They paid no heed to the presence of the white men, but kept at their chase till the buffalo fell. Since the general introduction of fire-arms in the Far West, many of the Indians are supplied with rifles, and year by year fewer of them engage in buffalo-hunting with the bow and arrow. As the rifle is much more murderous in its character than the more primitive arm, the slaughter of buffaloes by the Indians is greater than formerly. The whites are justly chargeable with indiscriminate butchery of the monarchs of the plains, but they are not the only offenders; the Indians are vying with their pale-faced antagonists in the work of destruction, and if a law is made against the slaughter of the buffalo, it should be enforced against all colors and races of men.

Conversation turned very naturally on the modes of hunting practised by the Indians, and on this subject the captain was able to give a good deal of information to the boys.

"Most white men," said the captain, "prefer to hunt the buffalo in ways that require skill or bravery, or both, but the Indian has no such sentimental notions. If he can drive a herd over a cliff and kill thou-



AN INDIAN HEAD.

sands of animals at a time, he is ready to do so, but such a performance on the part of whites is rarely heard of. So, too, is the practice of hunting on snow-shoes, which is almost entirely confined to the Indians. It is not much in vogue in this part of the buffalo-range, but prevails among the Sioux and other northern tribes where they have deep snows in winter.

"The buffalo is at the mercy of the hunter, as he can offer no defence. He sinks into the snow at every step, while his pursuer glides over it, and can choose his own position and distance. With a lance, or with a bow and quiver of arrows, an Indian can kill as many of the helpless creatures as he chooses, and he rarely stops till he has slaughtered all within his reach. It often happens that a hunter need not encumber himself with snow-shoes, but can walk on the hard crust, which easily supports his



KIOWA INDIANS CHASING BUFFALOES.

weight, while it sinks beneath that of the buffalo. Not only does it yield to the buffalo's feet, but the sharp crust lacerates him terribly, so that the skin is torn from his legs during the frantic efforts he makes to escape.

"The season when the crust is on the snow is the happy time for the wolves that always follow the herds of buffaloes. When the great animals become helpless in the snow, the wolves attack them, and frequently cause great havoc. They know the anatomy of the buffalo, and their first effort is to bite through the hamstrings, or tendons of the joints of the

hind legs. When this is done, the buffalo is disabled, and his conversion into food for wolves is a question of very brief time. When pursuing buffaloes in the open country where there is no snow, the first effort of the wolves is to hamstring their prey, and they often display great intelligence in accomplishing it. Several of them generally hunt together; and



INDIANS KILLING BUFFALOES IN THE SNOW.

while some engage the attention of a buffalo by worrying him in front, one of the pack will sneak around to the rear, and, by making a daring leap, will sever the hamstrings in a couple of bites. Then the buffalo falls to the ground, and as soon as he is down his destruction is certain. During their feast the wolves indulge in a great many fights, and the strongest generally refuses to allow the others to join the banquet till his own hunger is satisfied.

“Another method of hunting practised by the Indians is much more to their credit, as it requires skill and patience. As you are well aware, the buffalo herds are constantly followed by wolves, and the buffaloes are so accustomed to the presence of their enemies that they pay no attention to them, and allow them to come very close. The Indians disguise themselves in the skins of wolves, and by creeping on all fours, and imitating the motions of the animals they resemble, they can get into the midst of a herd without exciting the least suspicion. They are armed with their bows and a plentiful supply of arrows, and by watching their chances

they can bring down a dozen buffaloes, one after the other, without alarming the rest. Two Indians hunt together in this way, as the wolves generally go in couples. They are thus of mutual assistance, and less likely to put the buffaloes to flight than if hunting alone."

Soon after the return of our friends to camp, a couple of visitors came in. They were Indians from the hunting-party that had been pursuing the buffalo, and they professed the warmest friendship, and gave vent to numerous "How-hows," the Indian method of saying "How do you do?" The captain treated them civilly, though he knew perfectly well that they came to learn the strength of the party, and whether it would be worth attacking for the sake of plunder. The fellows remained only a short



"HOW-HOW!"

time, and then departed by a direction opposite to that by which they came. They evidently wanted to create the impression that they had dropped into the camp by accident, and had no hostile intentions. The

Doctor told the boys that in the hunting-season it is safe to assume that all Indians are hostile, or willing to be so if a suitable chance occurs.

Harry took a mental note of the appearance and dress of the visitors, and thought he should know them if he met them again. He was particularly interested in the Indian mode of hair-dressing, and thought the red men would make a better appearance if they employed barbers to cut their hair. The Doctor explained some of the principles of the Indian toilet, and showed the arrangement of the scalp-lock. He said it was not true, as many persons suppose, that the Indian, in scalping his enemy, removes the whole of the skin on which the hair grows. The scalp-lock on the Indian's head is about four inches in diameter, and it is a matter of pride with him to braid and arrange it so as to facilitate its removal in case he falls on the battle-field. He sets great store on his scalp apart from



THE SCALP-LOCK.

his regard for his life, and if he loses it, he is supposed to be excluded from the happy hunting-grounds which every red man hopes to enter. The Indians had rather fight with the whites than with other Indians, as the former do not take the scalps of those they kill, and therefore do not make any serious interference with their happiness beyond this life. If all the white soldiers and others engaged in fighting the Indians should adopt the practice of taking scalps, the savages would have more discouragements in going to war than they have at present.

Since the negro troops were sent to the plains to fight the Indians, the latter have been greatly disgusted. The negroes are excellent fighters, can endure much fatigue where it is not complicated with cold, and have been warmly praised for their excellent discipline. The Indians do not like the negro scalps, as the black men are in the habit of cutting their hair very short; but worse than that, from a red man's point of view, they are much given to scalping all the Indians they kill. The majority of the Indians on the plains will decline to attack a body of negro troops, when they would readily assail an equal number of whites.

CHAPTER XIX.

A FIGHT WITH THE SAVAGES.—INDIAN HABITS AND CUSTOMS.

AFTER the visit of the Indians the greatest care was taken to guard against a surprise. The animals were constantly picketed where they were under the eyes of three or four of the oldest of the plainsmen, and, as an additional precaution, these men kept their horses ready saddled, and their rifles in the best condition for immediate use. An Indian usually counts the cost of an attack before he makes it; and if he sees a herd of animals so well watched that a stampede will result in the death of several red men he is apt to let the business alone. Probably, in the majority of cases in which stock has been lost by an Indian stampede, the whites were guilty of negligence in some form or other. Generally they did not know the Indians were in the neighborhood, and were taken by surprise, or they had left the herd unguarded for a few moments while the men were taking supper. The most experienced of the plainsmen have an invariable rule of picketing their horses and setting a watch when within the limits of the Indian country, even if they have not heard of any savages in the vicinity.

Just before sunset there was an arrival that caused much excitement among the hunters. It was an ambulance containing two gentlemen, who had set out from Platte Crossing to join the hunting-party. They started two days later than Captain Bailey, and hoped to overtake him soon after the formation of the camp in the buffalo region. They had a serious adventure not three hours before reaching camp, and one of them was suffering from an arrow wound, which the Doctor proceeded to dress.

They were proceeding quietly, when some Indians were seen riding rapidly toward them. From their movements they were at once supposed to be hostile, and the driver put his four mules to their best speed. The Indians came up with the ambulance after a chase of a mile or more, and as soon as they were within range they let fly a couple of arrows.

This was the signal for a fight, and the two gentlemen responded with rifles and revolvers, while the driver attended to the team. A mule has

an instinctive dread of an Indian, and needs no urging when the red men are about, and all the driver had to do was to keep them in the proper direction. The Indians were on both sides of the vehicle, and close to it. Arrow after arrow pierced the covering, and it was marvellous that the occupants escaped. One Indian fell, and then another and another; there were some fifteen or twenty in the attacking party, and the bullets from the ambulance told rather severely on them; but they stuck to it bravely, and just as the gentlemen thought their chances of escape were very slight one of them managed to plant a bullet in the body of the chief. He fell from his pony, and the others gathered around him, while the ambulance went on. Whether the chief was killed or not there was no time to inquire, and the travellers were quite content to proceed without

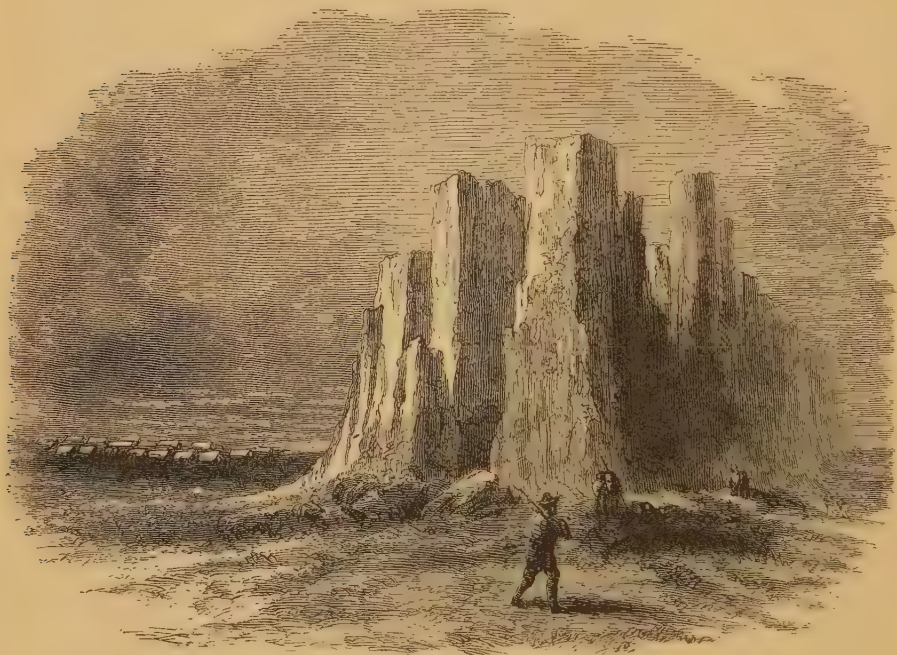


A FIGHT WITH THE INDIANS.

this important information. The attack was not renewed, and nothing more was seen of the Indians.

Captain Bailey determined, on the following morning, to change the position of the camp, so that the report of the spies would be of no use to the Indians. Accordingly, the tents were struck, the teams harnessed, and in a short time the train was on the move in the direction of the

Monument Rocks—a collection of cliffs that stood by themselves in the valley of the creek, and formed a landmark visible for a long distance.



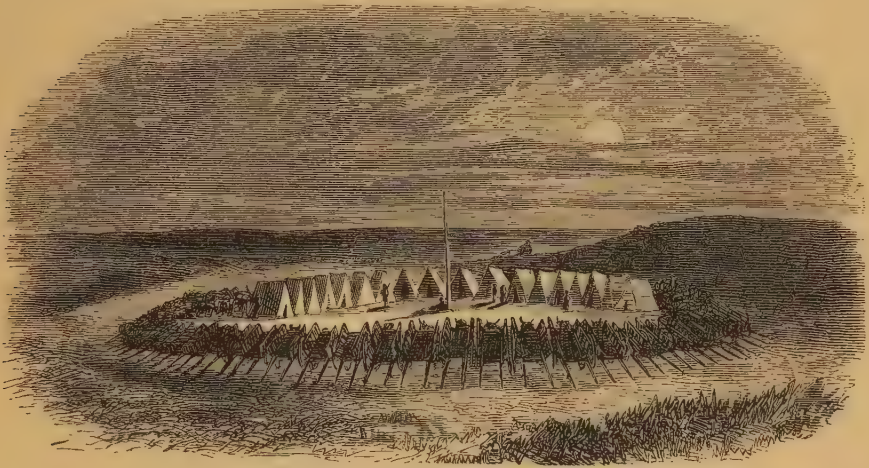
THE CAMP AT MONUMENT ROCKS.

Harry could hardly believe his eyes when he first caught sight of the rocks, as the resemblance to a pile of masonry was very striking. George was similarly deceived, and asked the Doctor if there were any ruins of ancient cities on the plain where they were travelling. It required very little imagination to convert the rocks into a cathedral with immense square towers, or one of those temples of ancient Egypt that are the wonder of all beholders.

They found a party camped there before them, and for mutual protection the new-comers joined the others. The wagons were "corralled;" that is, they were formed into an oval with an opening at one end, through which the stock could be driven. This is a well-known custom with all those who travel on the plains with wagons, whether drawn by oxen, horses, or mules. The corral is a yard where the stock can be driven to be yoked, or harnessed, or shut up at night; it also forms an excellent defence against Indians, as it is a fortification that they are far from willing to attack. Many a wagon-train has been saved from the

Indians by means of the corral, and others have been destroyed by negligence to form it.

Sometimes the tents form a part of the corral, particularly among the people of the Red River of the North, where little two-wheeled carts, each drawn by a single ox, are in general use. Farther south the cart is almost unknown, and its place is filled by the "prairie schooner," or large wagon with four wheels, and drawn by four or five yoke of oxen in each team. The name of "prairie schooner" is by no means inappropriate, as the white cover of the wagon is visible for a long distance over the treeless plain, and is by no means unlike the sail of a ship in its general appearance. A wagon-train may be quite aptly compared to a fleet of sailboats in company, and when it is encountered on a rarely travelled route



A CORRAL ON THE RED RIVER OF THE NORTH.

the sensation to the spectator is not unlike that of a sailor when he meets a ship on the trackless ocean.

The boys had seen several of the great ox-wagons used for the transport of merchandise on the plains, but up to their arrival at Monument Rocks they had no opportunity to examine one closely. Happily for the gratification of their curiosity, the train that they joined was composed of these vehicles, and they had plenty of time to study them.

Harry made note of the fact that the ox-wagon was a heavy vehicle, with a canvas cover thick enough to keep out the rain and protect the goods that were stowed beneath it. The cover was held in place by stout hoops, and when the wagon was to receive or discharge its load the cover and hoops could be easily removed. The Doctor told him that when the

train was on the move it was customary to "double up" both teams and wagons. One wagon had its tongue run under the body of another and made fast, and then the teams were composed of ten yoke of oxen instead of five. This arrangement enabled the train to be managed by fewer men than under the other system; and when a specially bad place in the road was reached or a river was to be crossed, the wagons could be separated and taken over singly.

The Doctor told the boys that the wagon had been a great feature on the plains, but was rapidly disappearing, owing to the extension of the railway. Wherever the railway went the wagon was of no further use, and thousands of these vehicles were lying idle in various towns and cities west of the Missouri River. At one time a single firm at Leavenworth, Kansas, had a million dollars invested in wagons and oxen, and other firms had proportionately large sums. They were stretched along the roads to Salt Lake City and Santa Fe, and when the gold excitement in the region of Pike's Peak was at its height and attracting the attention of the country, the trains along the road there formed an almost daily line.

The men that drove the teams were quite as interesting as the wagons. They reminded the boys of the rough fellows they had seen in the lumber-camps in the backwoods of Maine, and the Doctor told them there was a marked similarity between the two occupations. "These men are known as 'bullwhackers,'" said he, "and they will disappear in their turn as the boatmen of the Mississippi disappeared, when steamers took the place of flat and keel boats on the Father of Waters. The bullwhacker is a character; he has a hard life, and not infrequently lays his bones on the prairie, with the help of his enemy the red man. But he is attached to the plains, and it is said that when a man has once followed the occupation of ox-driver for a year or two, he is reluctant to give it up.

"His language does not fit him for the head of a Sunday-school. There is no more skilful adept in the use of profanity than the bullwhacker, and he rarely makes the most ordinary statement without the aid of a volley of oaths. His oxen are accustomed to be sworn at, and it is the belief of many a plainsman that a team cannot be made to pull a pound in a difficult place unless encouraged by the peculiar vocabulary of the driver.

"If you want to make a picture of the bullwhacker, you must draw a rough but well-formed man, with a face as brown as an overdone loaf, by reason of its exposure to the weather, and with hair and beard rarely visited by a comb; a slouch hat covers his head, and a long knife hangs at

his waist, ready for use on an Indian during a fight, or for the more prosaic occupation of cutting up meat for breakfast and dinner; his feet are incased in tall boots that half conceal his trousers, and these indispensable garments are often 'half-soled' in the rear with broad patches of buckskin, to give additional strength to new cloth, or cover serious rents in old; a red or blue shirt covers the upper half of his body; and as this garment is rarely washed, its appearance is by no means attractive.



PRAIRIE-SCHOONER AND BULLWHACKER.

“The whip of the bullwhacker is a remarkable contrivance, and when he uses it the effect is something fearful. The handle is not more than a yard in length, but the lash often measures eighteen or twenty feet. It is made of rawhide, cut in strips and braided, and there are various

fancies concerning the proper shape to be given to it. The most approved form is one that swells as it leaves the handle, and continues to do so for five or six feet; then it decreases gradually to the end, where it is like a thong of iron wire. It is popularly known as the 'blacksnake,' and when it is flung at an ox and takes him fairly on the side, it doubles him up as though he had been struck with a hammer. The old teamsters are wonderfully skilful in throwing the lash, which is no more than we should expect when we remember that they have a life-long practice with it. Sometimes a bullwhacker will hold a coin in his fingers for another to knock it out with his lash, just as gentlemen assist each other in pistol-practice. Not infrequently the result is the same as



THE INDIANS' VICTIM.

has been recorded of pistol-shots, and the holder of the coin carries a finger that has been stripped of skin, until nature heals the wound."

The boys went out with two of the men to assist in gathering buffalo-chips for the evening's fire. While making the round, they came upon the remains of a man who had evidently been killed by Indians. The flesh had been stripped from the bones by the wolves, and some of the prowlers were still in the vicinity, perhaps hoping that fortune would favor them again in the same way. The shoes were still on the feet, and the story of the death was told by four arrows sticking among the ribs. Evidently the Indians were not numerous, and had gone away hastily, but not so much so as to omit the ceremony of scalping their victim.

The arrows for war purposes are quite different from those employed in hunting buffaloes. The general shape and style are unlike, and the dissimilarity is greatest in the head of the weapon. The buffalo arrow is firmly fastened to the head, but the war arrow is so loosely attached that the attempt to withdraw it generally detaches the head, and leaves it in the flesh of the victim. It sometimes happens that a wounded man recovers with an iron arrow-head buried in his body, but more frequently the result is fatal. Sometimes arrows are poisoned, and in such cases the slightest scratch is liable to cause death.

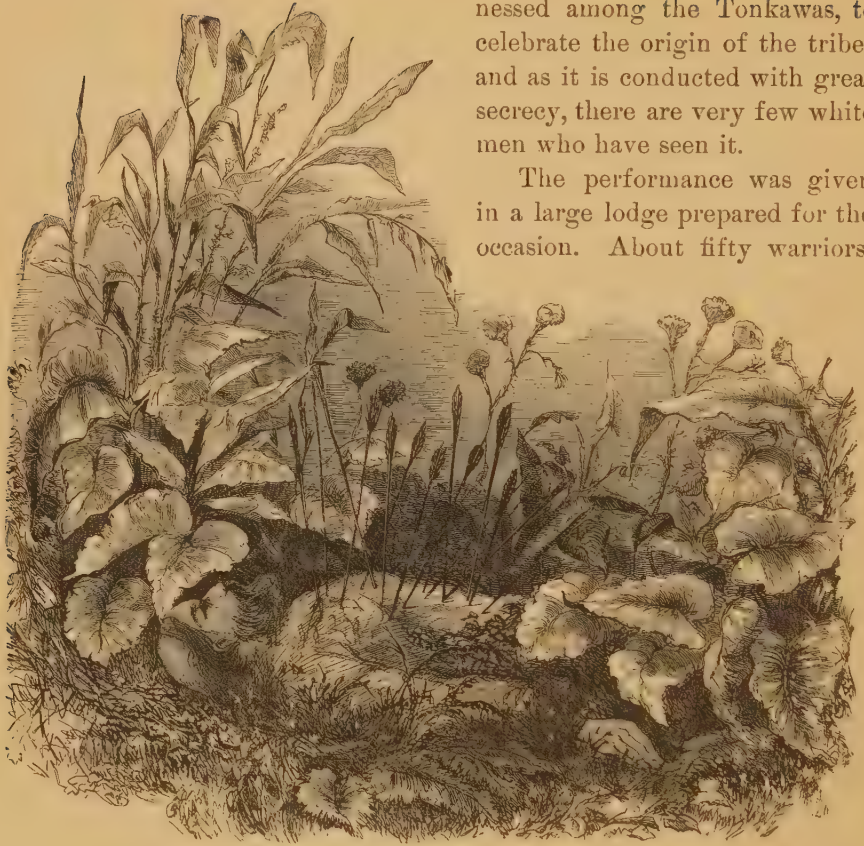
George was curious to know how the poison for arrows was obtained by the Indians, and the Doctor proceeded to enlighten him.

"They generally get it," said he, "from the fangs of a rattlesnake. He is made angry by being annoyed for awhile, and then a piece of meat is held out for him to strike at. Immediately he has done so, a stick is placed in the hole made by his fangs, and after it has remained there a short time, it is withdrawn and covered with a substance that protects it from the moisture. This piece of wood forms the arrow-head, and it is only necessary that it shall inflict a slight wound to cause death. Its effects may be counteracted in the same way as the bite of a rattlesnake: the wound may be vigorously sucked to remove the poison, or seared with a hot iron, while liberal doses of whiskey are supplied to the patient.

"Another mode of poisoning arrows is by dipping the points in a piece of putrid liver, and still another by touching them with strychnine after first moistening them with glue. Generally, the Indians do not use poisoned arrows, partly for the reason that they are dangerous to the owners of them, and partly because they are of no advantage in securing scalps. It is only when there is a war of extermination in progress that the poisoned arrow comes in play, and then it is used with great effectiveness."

The Doctor further explained that generally, when a party of Indians has killed a white man, each of them shoots an arrow into the body of the victim, so as to have a share in the honor of his slaughter. This is known as "the counting coup," and is occasionally useful to those who are pursuing a hostile band, as it reveals the number of Indians it contains. As many as fifty arrows have been found in the body of a single white man, and it was pretty evident that each arrow represented an Indian. They generally do this when they have time, and their neglecting the ceremony is an indication that they were in a hurry. But they must be very hard pressed indeed to omit to scalp the men who fall beneath their shots, and they often run great risks to secure the proofs of their valor.

After a successful fight the Indians generally take the earliest opportunity to hold a dance over the scalps they have taken. It usually takes place at night and around a fire, and this practice is turned to advantage by the old Indian-fighters, who sometimes manage to fall on them while engaged in their glorification. They have dances before starting on a foray, or proceeding on a peaceful hunt for buffaloes; in fact almost every event of consequence is thus celebrated. Some of the dances are common to all the Indians on the Western plains, while others are peculiar to certain tribes. Captain Marcy, in his "Army Life on the Border," gives an interesting description of a dance which one of his friends wit-



THE COUNTING COUP.

dressed in wolf-skins, came in on all fours, and by howling, growling, and quarrelling, they imitated very well the habits of the animals they represented. They kept this up for some time, and then began sniffing at the ground; as if searching for something concealed there.

By-and-by one of them stopped suddenly, and began to dig in the earth. The rest gathered round to assist him, and in a little while they brought out a live Indian, who had been buried there previous to the ceremony. As soon as they had brought him to view, they ran around him and examined him with the greatest apparent curiosity, as though such a being had never been seen before.

A council of the oldest wolves was called, to determine what to do with him. The Indian made a speech to the following effect:

“You have taken me from the spirit-land, where I was contented and

happy, and brought me into this world, where I am a stranger, and I know not what I shall do for food and clothing. It is better you should place me back where you found me, otherwise I shall freeze and starve."

The council deliberated on this proposal, and finally refused to put him back where they found him. They advised him to gain his living in the same way that the wolves did; he must go out into the wilderness, and live by robbing, killing, and stealing; but he must never build a house or cultivate the soil, as by so doing he would condemn himself to certain death. Then they gave him a bow and arrows, and explained



THE WOLF-DANCE OF THE TONKAWAS.

that they were sufficient for supplying him with food and clothing, and with this they retired from the lodge, and left him to shift for himself.

The Tonkawas and other tribes claim that they have always obeyed the injunction which is so closely connected with their origin. Most of the Indians of the Far West are opposed to living on reservations, and learning to till the soil, and it is doubtless due to some of their traditions that they have such an aversion to the habits of civilized life.

CHAPTER XX.

A CHANGE OF CAMP.—MORE HUNTING AND MORE INDIANS.

THE buffaloes were not disturbed on the day the camp was moved, as Captain Bailey did not think it prudent to go out till something was known of the number of Indians in the neighborhood and their disposition. There could be very little doubt of their unfriendly feeling, after the attack on the ambulance, and therefore an assault might be looked for whenever the Indians felt strong enough to capture the camp without too great a loss.

Just about sunset a friendly Indian came in and reported the buffaloes some twelve or fifteen miles to the south-west, and said they were being pursued by a band of a hundred or more Kiowas and half that number of Arapahoes. Farther to the west there were other herds of buffaloes, and he was not aware that they had been hunted by anybody, either white or red. A consultation was held, and it was determined to move in the direction of the new herds for the double purpose of avoiding an encounter with the Indians, and securing a hunting-ground where



MOVING INTO THE NEW CAMP.

the animals had not been pursued as much as those in the immediate neighborhood.

At daylight the teams were under way, and the new camp was formed in a locality where there was an excellent supply of wood and water, under the shelter of some cliffs that overhung the creek, and cut off all approach in that direction. Captain Bailey's party and the wagon-train had joined their forces, and as they moved into the camping-ground the long procession of vehicles presented an imposing picture. There were no indications that anybody had been there recently, and it was confidently expected that the hunters would have everything their own way for a few days at least.

The grass was thick and sweet in the valley, but on the hills surrounding it there was very little vegetation. A plant peculiar to the plains grew in the vicinity, and the boys were interested in the uses that the teamsters made of it. It was known as "soap-weed," and the roots were an excellent substitute for the common soap of civilization. Harry thought it would be a fortune to anybody who would endeavor to convert the weed into soap and place it on the market, but the Doctor told him the practical difficulties of the business would be the expense of transportation, which would eat up all the profits. Consequently, Harry abandoned his idea of The Great American Soap Company, and the millions that were to be made from its organization.



SOAP-WEED.

While Harry was pursuing his investigation with the newly-discovered plant, George was devoting his attention to the substitutes for water on the parts of the route where that article was scarce. He found that the kitchen and table utensils could be cleansed without water, and made as bright as the most fastidious could wish. Here is his note on the subject:

"They clean the knives and forks by sticking them in the ground a few times. The earth takes up the grease, or whatever else is adhering to them, and when the operation is completed the articles are thoroughly washed. Plates, cups, pans, pots, and kettles are rubbed with sand and

wisps of grass until perfectly dry and clean, and then they are ready for use when wanted. The man who invented this process knew what he was about."

Their expectations relative to the buffaloes were realized. The herds had not been disturbed, and the hunting was pursued to the satisfaction of all concerned for a couple of days. The third day it was found that the buffaloes had left the valley, and again the camp was changed. The boys found that the country became more broken as they went westward, and in some places the region next the streams was full of great seams that had been formed ages before by the water flowing down from the elevated to the lower land.

The buffaloes, in heading for a new feeding-ground, had gone among "The Breaks," as this peculiar formation is called, and the boys wondered how they could find their way through. The Doctor told them that the animals had trails, or paths, as already described, and in moving among the breaks he had never known them to get lost. The only danger to them in these localities was from the Indians, who sometimes station themselves where the ridges of the breaks are narrow, and drive the buffaloes over the cliffs by turning them from their track. It happens now and then that a couple of herds meet in the passes, and then a fight ensues between the leading bulls. The stronger pushes the weaker out of the way, and the latter is quite liable to be killed by the fall. These occurrences are rare, however, as the migrations of the herds are usually in one direction, according to the season of the year.

The boys gathered some additional facts about the trade in buffalo-robos, and the way in which it is conducted by white men and Indians. Their information came from several sources, and sometimes there was a conflict of authorities. It took them some time to arrange their notes into a concise story, which they did as follows:

"The slaughter of the buffaloes is estimated by those who have studied the subject at about a quarter of a million every year. One-third of the number is killed by white men, and the balance by Indians. The Indians kill for the sake of both meat and hides, but it is not likely that they save even half of the former. What they do not need for present use they preserve in two ways. They cut it into long strips, and dry it in the sun or over a fire. The meat thus preserved is said to be 'jerked,' and resembles a strip of leather both in appearance and taste. The other preparation is known as 'pemmican,' and is made of dried meat that has been pounded fine, and then mixed with berries and fat. It is sewed up in a green hide; and as the hide dries and shrinks the pemmican becomes



A HERD AMONG THE BREAKS.

so hard that a hatchet is required to cut it to advantage. It is easily transported, and forms the food of great numbers of people in the season when fresh meat cannot be obtained. The Indians and the hunters, who spend their lives

on the plains, pretend to be fond of it, but a white man who has been accustomed to the food of civilization does not take kindly to pemmican, and rarely eats it if he can get anything else.



“FIRE-WATER.”

“Of the buffaloes thus killed every year it is thought that the hides of all but ten or twenty thousand are saved. Fifty thousand are thought to be obtained by the ‘hide-hunters’ of Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and other western and south-western States, who make no attempt to save any of the meat beyond what they need at the time. Until a few years ago the Indians used to come to the forts or trading-posts once a year to sell their robes, and the scenes on those occasions were very interesting. They formed their camps just outside a fort, and a few of the Indians were let in at a time to do their trading. The whites were careful to keep well armed, and to put the red men outside when there was the least sign of a disturbance. The robes were usually taken at a valuation of four or five dollars each, and paid for in sugar at a dollar a pound, whiskey two dollars a pint, and other things in like proportion. Money changed hands very rarely, and when it did the coin in use was the American half-dollar—the only currency known to the wild Indian of the plains.

“The article most in demand among the Indians, and one of which they can never get an adequate supply, is whiskey. Most white men are unwilling to sell it to them, and for those unprincipled ones who supply them with the fire-water there are severe penalties prescribed. All the bad qualities of an Indian come out when he is intoxicated, and he will butcher his twin-brother, and all the women and children belonging to him, as readily as he would take a white man’s scalp. When a party of Indians has procured a lot of whiskey, they carefully lay aside all their weapons, so that no accident shall happen; and when this formality has been observed the intoxication begins. It is said that an Indian of the Kiowa tribe once asked a friendly white man to tie him hand and foot, so that he could do no harm, and then pour the whiskey down his throat. The pale-face did so; and when the red man had become insensible from



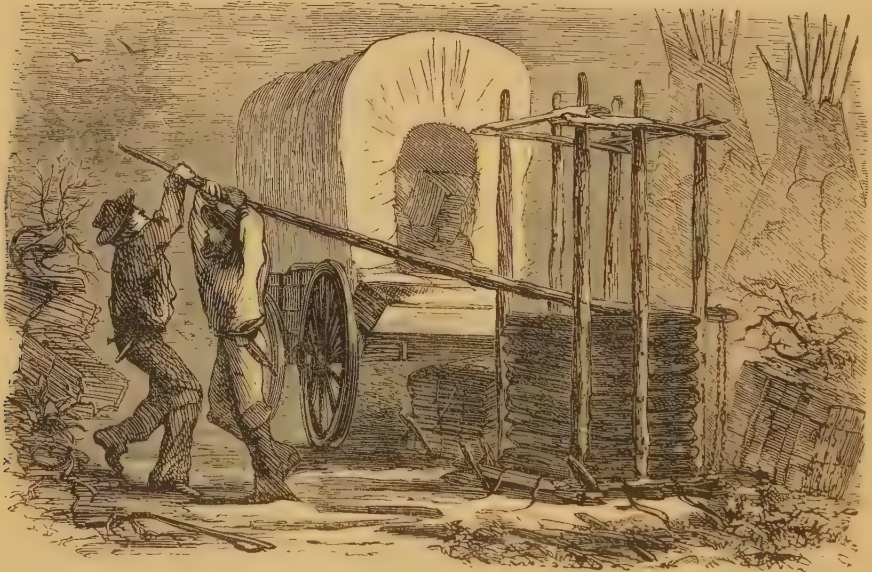
TRADERS AT AN INDIAN VILLAGE.

the effects of the liquid, the former departed with all the robes and other goods and chattels he could lay hands on. The theft was charged to others who dropped in after the white man had gone, and the loser was never able to fasten it on the right party.

“Of late years there has been so much competition for the Indian

trade, that the old custom of having the savages come to the posts has been given up, and the traders find their way to the Indian villages after the autumn hunts are over. They generally go in parties of five or six, under one leader, and it is desirable that a majority of them, and, if possible, the entire number, shall have a previous acquaintance with the Indians they are visiting.

"They carry several wagon-loads of Indian goods, such as beads, cloths of different kinds, trinkets, toys, and a thousand odds and ends that



PRESSING ROBES INTO BALES.

please the fancy of the savages. Very rarely do they carry whiskey; not that they are morally opposed to dealing in that article, but because they know their lives will be endangered if they allow an Indian to become intoxicated in their vicinity, and also if it is known that they have whiskey in their outfits and will not sell it. The best plan is not to have a drop of it along, and then there can be no trouble. The most of the traders are also chary of selling fire-arms to the Indians; but the latter have no great difficulty in procuring both rifles and ammunition, as there is a sufficient number of unprincipled men ready to supply them on receipt of the high prices the Indians are willing to pay.

"The trading is not opened until the chief has been properly loaded with presents, and everybody who has any influence in the camp must be

attended to in the same way. Sometimes the trader has a tent of his own, but more frequently he is lodged by the chief, who assigns him a *tepe*, or wigwam for his private use. The fact is, the chief thereby quarters his family on the trader, and expects them to be equal sharers of the white man's food as long as the latter has any to share. Then there is a reception or dance the evening after his arrival, when he is expected to make presents to everybody, and the festivities are kept up for two or three days before trade can be opened. By this time a quarter of the stock will be given away, and consequently the trader must demand high prices when the actual commerce is under way.

"As fast as the skins are obtained they are made into bundles of ten each, and these bundles are compressed into bales by means of a rude apparatus erected on the spot by the owner of the goods. When the trader has exhausted his stock, or secured all the robes that the village contains, he moves on, and the place knows him no more till the following year.

"An Indian village in winter is an interesting spectacle. The squaws perform the work, while the men lounge about, or sit around a fire and have a comfortable smoke. They wrap themselves in their buffalo-robes, and pay little attention to what is going on, with the exception of a few who are stationed in tree-tops or other elevated places to give warning of the approach of any possible danger. Lances and shields are placed where they can be readily seized, and some of the ponies are tethered in front of the lodges of their owners. The boys amuse themselves by practising with bows and arrows, and when other marks are wanting they make use of the wolfish-looking dogs that abound among the Indians.

"These dogs are not of much use for hunting purposes, but are maintained as articles of food. Roast and stewed dog are delicacies among the Indians, and when a chief wishes to show special honor to a visitor, the fattest dog in the village is slaughtered and served up. An Indian who visited a military post on one occasion took a fancy to the wife of one of the officers, and proposed a trade. He offered two of his own squaws in exchange, and when the proposal was declined, he offered four of the nicest and fattest dogs that could be found, and had them led before the officer. He argued that he was very liberal in offering two squaws and four dogs for one pale-faced woman, and refused to believe his ears when the officer again told him he did not wish to trade.

"When there is a scarcity of fuel, an Indian builds a small fire on the ground, and sits over it with his buffalo-robe so arranged as to enclose both himself and the fire. In this way he can keep warm with very little outlay, and have all the advantages of a sweat-box without paying for



AN INDIAN VILLAGE IN WINTER.

it. He is a great advocate of this form of bath, and rarely takes any other. It is a remedy for many diseases, and in some instances a good one."

A great deal has been written about the treatment of the Indians, and the best mode of civilizing them. There is no space in the limits of this book to go into a discussion of the Indian question and its various bearings, and we can only touch on a few generalities.

In the first place, it is asking a great deal of the Indian to demand that he shall live on a reservation and adopt our habits and mode of life. He has been a nomad since he was born, and his ancestors were nomads before him; many of the Indian traditions are opposed to the settlement of the red man in any one place, and consequently he revolts at the idea of living on a reservation and tilling the soil.



A CHEAP FIRE.

In the second place, when we have overcome his scruples by argument, force, or persuasion, and placed him on a reservation, we do not keep faith with him. When the land where he lives proves to have any value, it is seized by adventurers, and the Indian is robbed of his own. Naturally he resents the intrusion and murders the intruders, and in so doing he indulges in the barbarity for which the red man is famous. Then retaliation comes; the Indian is dispossessed of his lands, and an Indian war is the result. The red man is driven farther into the wilderness, and placed on a reservation which has no value at the time; but as soon as it is wanted by any one the old scenes are repeated.

In more than half the troubles we have had with the Indians of the Far West the white man has been the origin of the difficulty. Dishonest Indian agents, lawless frontiersmen, miners, and adventurers generally, have led us into wars with the savages, who have all the base passions of humanity, and are capable of untold barbarities when once they are roused.

In British America there has hardly been the least disturbance with the Indians for more than half a century. The authorities who deal with them are careful to execute every promise, whether verbal or written,

with the most scrupulous exactness; and any white man who wrongs an Indian in the least degree is liable to severe punishment—and, what is more, he gets it. The result is, the Indian has no cause for complaint, and no occasion to indulge in war.

On our side of the line there is hardly a year in which there is not an Indian outbreak somewhere, and we are all familiar with the story of Indian cruelties. It should properly be called a white man's outbreak, as the cause of the trouble will generally be found in the violation of a treaty, or in the deliberate robbery of the Indian by an enterprising pale-face.

There is no public question of the day that requires more careful consideration of both its sides than that of our relations with the Western Indians, and probably no question that has been considered so much as this from only one side. The atrocities of the Indians are all related to us, and they are numerous enough to satisfy the most blood-thirsty; but the original causes are rarely heard of. For the past twenty-five years our Indian Bureau at Washington has been famous for its iniquities. The infection has spread to the Far West; and when the rough frontiersmen of the plains and mountains see the example which the Government gives them, it is no wonder that they are somewhat confused concerning the rights of property, especially when the property they covet is in the possession of an Indian.

CHAPTER XXI.

LEAVING THE BUFFALO LAND.—ANTELOPE-HUNTING.

THE chase of the buffalo was abandoned, as everybody had had all he wanted of the sport. The country to the south was reported clear of Indians and abounding in antelopes, and it was determined to have a day or two of antelope-hunting, and meantime to work in the direction of the Kansas Pacific Railway, whence some members of the party would return with the teams to the point of departure, while others, including the Doctor and the boys, would proceed by rail to Denver.

Accordingly, camp was broken one fine morning, and the march resumed. An hour or two after they had started the boys saw from the crest of a ridge a sight that astonished them.

As they looked forward they saw a broad lake, with several islands on which trees were growing. The train was moving toward the lake, and both Harry and George wondered how they would cross it, as there was not a sign of a ferry-boat to carry them over.

They questioned the Doctor on the subject; the latter laughed, and said they would have no trouble in traversing the lake, and find no need of boats for the transit.

Then he explained that what they saw was a mirage—a phenomenon well known to sailors and to travellers over deserts and other plains in different parts of the world. The cause of the mirage, he said, was a matter of much dispute among scientific men; some claiming that it was the result of refraction, and others of reflection. His own opinion was that it was caused by the reflection of the rays of light on a stratum of air of a different density than that through which they were looking. Its general effect was to create the appearance of ponds and forests where none existed, and sometimes objects below the horizon were brought into view. Particularly was this the case at sea, where ships known to be beyond the line of vision were seen sailing in the clouds—sometimes in their proper position, and sometimes inverted. Stories of phantom ships doubtless had their origin in the mirage, especially as it was the habit of

was the invention of Major Sibley, of the United States Army, and is fashioned after the Indian lodge. It is conical, and has a broad base, so that it can resist the wind, and the pole in the centre can be made of iron, with a tripod beneath. A fire may be built beneath the tripod for cooking or heating purposes, and the top can be opened, so as to give good ventilation. A flap over the top gets up a draught with the wind, and this idea, like that of the shape of the tent, was borrowed from the Indians. Our friends were much pleased with their canvas house, and voted unanimously that it was the best thing of the kind they had seen. The one they occupied was large enough to accommodate eight or ten men with ease, and the Doctor told them that twelve or fourteen could find sufficient space therein for sleeping purposes.

They were a sorry-looking party the next morning, as the most of them had been without sleep, and the dust had covered them so deeply that it was not easy to recognize one from another. But all were disposed to be merry, and many a joke was cracked over the breakfast, which was prepared with much difficulty, owing to the trouble of keeping the fire within bounds, or even of maintaining it at all. Though faces were soiled, the appetites were good, and no one had even a thought of complaining, much less of expressing himself sorry that he was there.

The teller of the brad-awl story came out with a fresh narrative this morning that set everybody in a roar.

"I was once out," said he, "on the head-waters of the Smoky Hill River, when we

had a wind to which last night was the merest puff. Talk of blowing great guns! why it blew a whole park of artillery from the front of the military post, three miles away, and sent the cannon through the air as though they had been corn-stalks. I saw one of 'em myself; it was a 12-pound howitzer, that was taken clean from the ground and carried two miles and a quarter, and a part of the way it went through the tops of some cotton-wood trees, and cut 'em off like a knife."



THEIR CANVAS HOUSE.

"I would suppose," remarked one of his listeners, "that a wind strong enough to move a cannon would not leave much of a tree standing. How was that?"

"'Twasn't none of my business," was the reply. "The tree had to take care of itself.

"That same wind tipped over our wagons, and actually blew the tire from one of the wheels. It stripped the shoes from two-thirds of the



POST LODGINGS.

mules, and one shoe was picked up fifty-nine rods from where the mule was picketed. All the old mules stood with their heads to the wind, but the young ones turned tails to it, and found themselves shaved as clean as though a St. Louis barber had gone over 'em with a razor. I saw it with my own eyes, and I measured the distance that the shoes were blown."

"Wonder it didn't blow you away while it was about it," said another of his hearers.

"I held on to the ground," was the reply, "and I held on hard, you bet. A good deal of the ground was blown off, and I've heard that a man who had a ranch on Smoky Hill Creek of three or four hundred acres found his whole property—

land, buildings, and all—blown clear over to the other side and down on another man's ranch. They had a lawsuit to settle the question of title, and while the case was going on the Court wouldn't let either of 'em occupy the property. They used to lean up against a post and sleep, as neither dared to lie down for fear the other would go and squat on the land. Neither could move without waking the other, and so it was a fair shake all around."

The wind abated as the sun rose in the sky, and by eight o'clock it was almost a calm.

Some hours were spent in repairing damages caused by the wind, and after a general survey it was found nothing serious had happened. These winds are of frequent occurrence on the plains, and blow with a violence



STAMPEDE OF HORSES AND MULES IN A STORM.

unknown in the Eastern States. They generally come from the north, and are severely cold, and the old plainsmen tell frightful stories of their effects. They are most to be dreaded when they occur in winter, as they are accompanied by snow, and cause heavy losses of stock. Captain Marcy once encountered one of these storms on the divide, or ridge, between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers. It lasted for sixty hours, and its fury was so great that it was impossible for him or any of his men to face the blast of wind and snow. A drove of his horses and mules stampeded during the storm, and ran fifty miles before they stopped. Three of the herdsmen tried to follow them, but only went a short distance; only one of them found his way back to camp, and that after great suffering.

A scout was sent out to ascertain the position of the antelope herds, so that no time should be lost in hunting them on the following day. It was found that they were in large numbers not more than five or six miles away, and during the evening the hunting-parties were arranged. The boys asked if they would chase the antelope on horseback as they had chased the buffaloes, and were rather taken aback when informed that horses were of very little use in hunting this swift-footed animal.

"The antelope," said the Doctor, "is one of the swiftest runners on the plains. He loves the open country, and shuns the forest, and he is very particular about his food. His scientific name is *Antilocapra Americana*, and naturalists have had some trouble in classifying him. When



"BILLY."

he was first discovered by Lewis and Clarke in the early part of the century, there was considerable discussion as to his proper place. He is smaller than the common deer, as he rarely weighs more than seventy or eighty pounds, and is not above three feet high at the shoulder. He is very shy of the presence of man, and when the herds are grazing they have sentinels stationed on the ridges and all the highest points of ground in the vicinity to give notice of the approach of danger. He is very swift of foot, and can outstrip the most powerful horse, though it is claimed by some hunters that a horse has more endurance, and can run down an antelope in a chase of six or eight miles. But the wear and tear of the horse can hardly be compensated by the capture

of the antelope, as he is not a very valuable commodity, and his flesh is liable to be heated and rendered useless in a long chase.

"Young antelopes are very easily domesticated, and in a few days they become so tame as to be constantly in the way. At many of the farm-houses you will find them kept as pets, and the chances are even that we shall have one or more of them in camp after our first hunt. The last time I was out here we had one that was caught by a hunter and brought into camp. We named him "Billy," and he soon became a favorite with everybody. He stuck to the camp, and followed the wagons on the march; and when we came in sight of herds of antelope he stared at them in a vacant sort of way, and did not show the least desire for joining his old comrades. Somehow they do not live long in captivity, and you will rarely see a tame antelope more than a year old. It has a mysterious disease that kills it in a few days, whether in a tame or wild

state. Sometimes this disease takes the form of an epidemic, and the whole antelope population for many miles will be swept away. A few years ago there was an epidemic of this sort that was estimated to have caused the deaths of fifty thousand antelopes in less than a month.

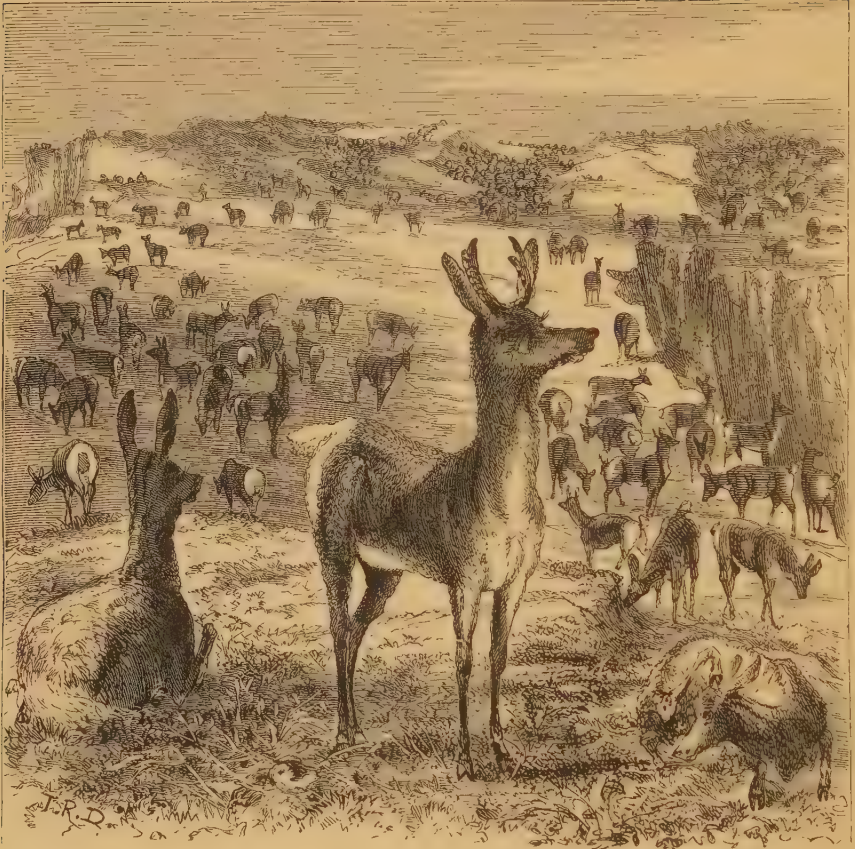
"What with disease and the rifle of the hunters, the antelopes are rapidly diminishing in numbers, and the country where they range is growing smaller every year. The early explorers found them in enormous herds, and sometimes there was hardly an hour of the day when antelopes were not in sight.

"Of late years it has become the fashion to chase the antelope with dogs, and many officers of the army and farmers living on the plains keep packs of hounds trained for the purpose. The best dogs for this work are the Scotch deer-hounds, but only a few of them have thus far been imported. A good hound will bring down an antelope in a run of a couple of miles, provided the latter has not too much start. The hunter can follow on horseback, and if he is well mounted he will not be very far behind at the death. The indications are that as time goes on this sport will be quite fashionable, as it is gaining ground steadily, and some who laughed at it at first are now among its most earnest advocates."

Our friends were not provided with dogs, and consequently coursing was out of the question. The Doctor announced that stalking would be the order of the hunt, and for that purpose he provided himself with a short stick to which a handkerchief could be attached. This, in addition to his rifle and ammunition, was all the equipment he carried.

The hunters set out soon after breakfast, and rode in the direction where the antelopes were reported to be grazing. They circled round to leeward, as the antelope has a keen nose for smells, and can detect the white man a long distance off, provided the wind is blowing in the right direction. The antelope has three protections—his sharp sight, his delicate nose, and his swift legs; and when these fail he has a woman's argument—tears. The antelope's eye is large, full, and lustrous; and his gaze is soft as that of a young girl. When he is wounded or suffering he weeps, and it requires a man of strong nerve to look unmoved upon the dying struggles of an antelope, or his agony in disease. The flow of tears is copious, and there is something very human about the appearance of the animal when calamity has overtaken him.

They approached a ridge, and the guide, who was in advance, motioned them to stop. They dismounted, and, leaving their horses in charge of a couple of the men, the hunters crept to the summit. Peering cautiously over, the boys saw something that was decidedly new to their eyes.



A HERD OF ANTELOPES.

In an undulating valley, broken by a few narrow chasms, a herd of antelopes were feeding, and quite unconscious that anybody was observing them. There were hundreds of them: Harry thought there might be thousands; and while some nibbled the herbage, others stood with their noses in the air, and had evidently satisfied their appetites. Far as our friends could see along the valley the herd extended, and the boys were ready to believe the assertion of the guide that there was "no end of antelope" in the neighborhood. George called attention to the fact that each antelope had hoisted a flag of truce, and evidently wanted to be let alone. The Doctor explained that Nature has painted the rump of the antelope white, and made the rest of the body a reddish gray. The appearance of this white rump, especially when the animal is running, is quite comical, as it suggests the waving of a white cloth in the wind.

The hunters inspected the herd for a few minutes, and then scattered for active work. Some crept along the ridge, while others returned to their horses and rode in a direction parallel to the position of the herd. The Doctor and the boys were of the former party, and they moved at least a quarter of a mile from where they first looked on the antelopes.

The Doctor instructed the boys to stretch themselves on the ground and lie as still as possible, with their rifles ready. He took a position a little in front of them, and then fastened his handkerchief to the stick and fixed it in the ground. It waved there like a flag, and very soon it was perceived by a group of antelopes that were feeding a few hundred yards away.

The antelope has a great deal of curiosity, and when he sees a strange object his first impulse is to investigate it. The hunters are aware of this propensity, and many a ranger of the plains has fallen a victim to the bullet in consequence of it.

When the antelopes saw the Doctor's handkerchief waving in the wind they stood still for a few moments, and then cautiously approached



CALLING ANTELOPES.

it. They circled around as they came near, and took exactly the position that was desired. The Doctor whispered to the boys to aim at the animals in the order in which they stood, and to fire the moment he did so.

On and on came the deluded beasts, and when they were within less

than thirty yards the Doctor fired. The boys followed his example, and were only a few seconds behind him. There was no fear that the antelopes would run away in this brief interval, as it is the habit of most animals of the deer family to stand as if dazed for a short time when anything surprises them. An expert hunter can sometimes bring down two or three of them before the herd collects its senses sufficiently to run out of danger. When it has once taken to its heels there is no use in following.

Each of the three shots was successful, and each of the hunters brought down a prize. Two of the antelopes were killed instantly, but the third was not dead when they reached him. The tears flowed from his eyes, and the boys realized what had been told them of the necessity of being very hard-hearted when looking at a wounded antelope.

The Doctor drew his hunting-knife and cut the throats of the antelopes, so that the meat should be properly bled. Leaving the animals where they had fallen, the three sportsmen returned to their horses and gave directions for bringing in their game. The party had been followed from camp by one of the drivers with a couple of pack-mules, and in a little while the three prizes were loaded and on their way to the tents. Our friends rode in the direction that the other hunters had taken, and soon heard shots resounding along the valley. A little later they met the gentlemen returning to camp, and found they had been successful in shooting half a dozen antelopes by stationing themselves at a point where the herd would be likely to pass when frightened, and then sending men around to make an alarm. Another hunter, who went off by himself to an isolated group, was fortunate enough to kill a fine buck by stalking him with a handkerchief in the same way as the Doctor had done.

There was an abundance of venison in the camp that evening, and everybody had his fill, with some to spare. The next day the camp was moved to the southward, and more antelopes were pursued; and in the afternoon of the third day the party reached the line of railway where the hunting-expedition was to end.

CHAPTER XXII.

OVERLAND TO SAN FRANCISCO.—VISIT TO THE FARALLON ISLANDS.

THE evening was spent in settling the accounts of the expedition, and in preparing for the separation of the following morning, when the express train would arrive on its westward way. There were many regrets at the necessity for breaking up, and the hope was repeatedly expressed that another hunting-party might be organized in the future, and contain as many as possible of those who had just finished their experience of the buffalo range.

As our friends stepped on board the train Harry acknowledged to a little moisture about the eyelids as the result of a farewell hand-shake with Captain Bailey. George was troubled in the same way and for the same reason; and when it came to a call for three cheers as the train moved off, the youths were too husky to give the proper effect to their voices. The Doctor was likewise indisposed in the region just behind his spectacles, and said it was strange that the glasses had suddenly become dim.

It was evening when they reached Denver. The Doctor looked around for the landmarks which were familiar to him years before, but could find none. He had seen Denver when it was a settlement of less than four thousand inhabitants; now it was a prosperous city, containing more than forty thousand people, and the terminus of five different lines of railway. It was growing rapidly, and the old prophecy that Denver would one day become the metropolis of all the Rocky Mountain region seemed to be fully verified. It had all the characteristics of a busy commercial centre, and was daily growing in wealth and importance.

"What a pity," said Harry, the morning after their arrival, "that Lord Byron never came to America! If he had done so he would have changed some of his lines."

George looked up inquiringly, and waited for Harry to explain.

"Don't you see?" said the latter; "he says in one place,

" 'A thousand years scarce serve to form a state.' "



A PART OF DENVER.

Evidently he never heard of Colorado, or he wouldn't have written as he did."

"Good reason for him not to hear of it," responded George, "as he died long and long before there was a white man living in Colorado."

The conversation took a varied turn through the domain of poetic license and the rapid growth of civilization in Colorado and California. It was finally interrupted by the entrance of the Doctor, who announced that they would start the following day for an excursion to South Park and the region around Pike's Peak, and perhaps would indulge in whatever hunting the country afforded.

An hour later this plan of campaign was completely upset by the receipt of a despatch from San Francisco. A council of war was held at once; telegrams were flashed to New York, and from New York back to Denver; then a despatch was hurried to San Francisco; and before night it was arranged that the Doctor and the boys would take the next train for the Pacific coast, and leave the excursion in the mountains of Colorado for some future occasion.

The reason for this change was contained in the telegram from San

Francisco, which was an invitation for the three adventurers to join a party about leaving for a tour by steamer along the western coast of North America. The opportunity was a rare one, as there was a prospect of visiting places quite out of the ordinary routes of travel. The telegraph was of great use to the travellers in arranging the details of their trip, as it enabled them to consult with friends in New York and San Francisco—all within a few hours, and to settle various little matters of money and vacations without any delay. All honor to the telegraph for the advantages it has conferred on the human race in the rapid transmission of the messages of business or friendship, of diplomacy or calamity, in this latter half of the nineteenth century.

And so they went westward, and did not halt till they reached San Francisco. If any of our readers wish to know about a journey overland by the Pacific Railway, they are respectfully referred elsewhere.*

At the station at Oakland, on the opposite shore of the bay from San Francisco, they were met by Major Barton, an old friend of the Doctor. The boys were introduced to the major, and then the party went on



ALKALI DESERT, CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILWAY.

board the magnificent ferry-boat that was to convey them to the great city by the Western Ocean. During the passage across the bay the major explained their proposed trip, and said they had arrived just in time.

"You must defer any investigation of California and its wonders till your return from our cruise," he continued, "as we are off to-morrow."

* "The Boy Travellers in the Far East: Adventures of Two Youths in a Journey to Japan and China." By Thomas W. Knox, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1880.

We will stop to-night at the Palace Hotel—the largest and finest hotel on the face of the earth—and to-morrow morning we go on board a little steamer that will take us to the Farallon Islands. We will spend a few hours there, and then return to San Francisco, to go at once on the ship that is to carry us along the coast.

“You need no preparation of any kind, as the ship is fully supplied with everything except your personal baggage. Your trunks can go on board at once, and you only need your satchels for the night in the city and the trip to the Farallones.”

They found the Palace Hotel a wonderful structure, and were fully prepared to believe it the grandest thing of the kind yet constructed. Early in the morning they were out of bed, in compliance with the stipulations of the major; and before eight o'clock the little steamer was carrying them through the Golden Gate and out on the broad Pacific. Then the boys had time to look around them and ask what the Farallon Islands were.

“The Farallon Islands,” said Major Barton, “are a little cluster of rocks about twenty-five miles from the entrance of the bay of San Francisco. There are six of them altogether, and the largest is about a mile long, and three hundred and forty feet high. Their only human inhabitants are the persons connected with the light-house. The islands lie in the track of ships entering or leaving the harbor of San Francisco, and for their benefit the government maintains a light-house of the first class. This steamer is bound there with supplies for the light-keepers, and the Collector of the Port has kindly consented to let us go along.

“But if there are few human inhabitants there,” he continued, “there is no lack of other animated life. There are thousands of sea-lions that make their home there, and there are sea-birds in countless numbers; and there are lots of rabbits on the largest island, which are descended from a few pairs that an enterprising Californian took there some years ago in the expectation that he would be able to supply the San Francisco market from their increase. The scheme was not altogether what he anticipated, and he has not made a fortune by the operation. The eggs of the sea-birds are far more valuable than the rabbits, and there is a company that supplies San Francisco with all the eggs it can use, and more too, in the season when the birds are laying.”

As they approached the islands, the boys could see the birds sitting on the rocks or flying through the air in great numbers. The major explained that there were four varieties of birds on the islands; they were called shags, gulls, murre, and sea-parrots. Only the eggs of the gulls

and murre were fit for food. The collectors were in the habit of destroying those of the shags and sea-parrots, in order to keep down their numbers as much as possible, and make room for the others. The eggs are largely used in San Francisco for making omelets, custards, and similar dishes, but they are not served up in the ordinary ways in which eggs come to the table. When first laid they have no disagreeable flavor, but after a few days the fishy taste for which they are famous asserts itself.

The major further explained that the business of egg-hunting on the Farallones had been more profitable in the early days than it is at present.



SEA-BIRDS ON THE FARALLON ISLANDS.

Eggs were worth a dollar a dozen for some time after the discovery of gold in California, and on one occasion a boat brought in one thousand

dozen of sea-birds' eggs and sold them all at that price. The islands were considered so valuable that an egg war broke out, and the men who went there used to have serious fights for the right to carry on their enterprise. In one of these fights two or three men were killed, and the government authorities were obliged to interfere to preserve order. In course of time a company was formed that bought out all rival claimants, and of late years the egg-hunters have no enemies more dangerous than birds to contend with.

They had some difficulty in landing, as the water was rough and the rocky shore was not a welcome place for a boat; but they got safely on land, where the boys had a chance to see the sea-birds at home, and to study their mode of life.



NEST OF A GULL.

The major called their attention to the nest of a gull, which was a very rude affair, consisting of a few sticks and sea-weeds pitched together in a way that did not reflect creditably on the builder. It contained a couple of young chicks that had recently come to light, and were looking wonderingly at a third, which was just emerging from its shell.

Harry asked what kind of a nest was built by the murre, and was rather taken aback when told that the murre did not trouble itself to make a nest, but deposited its eggs on the bare rock, wherever it could find a place. The birds seek out the wildest part of the rocks for depositing their eggs, and the hunters do not have an easy time in getting there. During the season they go over the ground every morning, gathering the fresh eggs and clearing away the remains of broken or decayed ones. The boys wanted to join the egg-hunters, but changed their minds when the major gave them some details of the work.

"In the first place," said he, "you have the roughest kind of climbing over the rocks, and would return with your limbs aching from the fatigue of the excursion. The birds are not willing to surrender their eggs to a stranger to whom they have had no introduction, and they generally make it decidedly unpleasant for him. The gull remains on her nest till she is pushed or driven off, and she can bite very sharply, as many an egg-hunter will testify. The murre does not bite, but she stays on her



BIRD-EGGING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

nest till the hunter is within a few feet of her; then she screams and rises into the air, and the scream generally brings up hundreds or thousands of others. They fly around the hunter and come disagreeably near to his face, and, while they are above him, he gets a drenching of fresh and dry guano that is anything but pleasant.

“The gulls get through breeding much sooner than the other birds, and then they devote themselves to eating up the eggs of their rivals. They follow closely on the heels of an egger, and sometimes when he has uncovered a nest they rush in and seize the eggs while he has his hand extended to gather them. When a gull takes an egg in this way, she

flies upward, and as she does so she breaks the shell, devours what she can catch in her beak at a gulp, and allows the rest of the contents to fall upon the man beneath. The free bath of raw eggs does not improve his appearance nor his temper, and some of the hunters occasionally indulge in strong language at the gulls. The latter do not mind it at all, but go on with their amusement as though nothing had happened.

"And furthermore there are many places so rough that it is impossible to carry a basket, and the hunter must stow the eggs in the front of his shirt and bring them down to the points where the baskets can be used. It occasionally happens that a man with a shirt full of eggs slips on the rocks and breaks the shells; not only has his labor been in vain, but he is daubed with the mess till he looks as though he was dressed for a masquerade in the character of 'the animated omelet.' After what you have heard, perhaps you will not be anxious to go on an excursion with the gatherers of eggs; if you are, you can be accommodated, as the manager of the business is an old friend of mine."

Both Harry and George were quite willing to look on from a distance, and learn from others about the practical work of gathering eggs.

By the time this conversation had ended, the party reached the residence of the egggers—a few rude shanties not far from the landing-place. In front of the buildings there were rows on rows of baskets filled with eggs, and ready for transportation to San Francisco. Some of the men had just come in from their work, while others were out on the rocks engaged in the customary fights with the birds, and getting their allowance of unsavory drenchings from the winged inhabitants of the islands.

In response to their questions the boys learned that there were fifteen men altogether engaged in gathering eggs, and in some years they numbered eighteen or twenty. The egg season lasts about two months, and the average harvest is from fifteen to seventeen thousand dozens. As many as thirty thousand dozens were gathered in some of the earlier years of the business, when there were no restrictions; but it was found that this wholesale gathering had a tendency to depopulate the islands, and when the present company came into peaceful occupation they adopted a policy of preservation. Certain places are reserved for breeding purposes, and a peculiar habit of the murre is employed to advantage.

George asked what this habit was, and learned in reply that the murre, when undisturbed, does not lay more than two eggs in a season; but if these are taken away it lays others, and when these are removed it repeats the process. In this way it can be robbed of four or six eggs in a season without any interference of its breeding capacities, provided it is allowed

to hatch the last of its production. Consequently, the hunters cease their operations a little before the close of the season, so that the murre can rear its family. It is a faithful parent, and the male bird takes his share of the labor of sitting on the nest; and when the female is there, her partner generally stays near, in order to keep away the predatory gulls.

The flesh of the murre is not fit to eat, on account of its fishy taste and its great toughness. It is about the size of a small duck, but it produces an egg as heavy as that of a goose. The eggs are curiously spotted, and there are no two that are spotted just alike.

The high prices that prevailed in the early days of California are no longer obtained. The eggs from the Farallon Islands rarely realize more than twenty-five cents a dozen to the hunters, and consequently the revenue from them is not a large one. The expense of boats and men must be deducted, and it is easy to see that the Farallon Islands are not the mine of wealth which many persons might suppose.

When their investigation of the birds was concluded, the boys turned their attention to the more ponderous inhabitants, which were known as sea-lions. The Doctor explained that they belonged to the seal family, but were of no value as articles of commerce. Their skins were covered with coarse hair that did not serve any useful purpose, and the result was that the sea-lion was practically undisturbed. The foreman of the egg establishment said they occasionally shot one of the monsters to get the oil for their lamps, and once in a while they captured one alive by throwing a lasso around him, and then plunging him into a tank that was ready to receive him. In this way he could be carried to San Francisco, where he soon learned the ways of civilization, and in a short time seemed to forget all about his wild life on the rocks and in the water.

There were thousands of sea-lions in sight when the boys visited the island, and they showed how little was their fear of man by allowing the party to approach quite near them. Some of them were estimated to weigh from fifteen hundred to two thousand pounds, and they looked not unlike great oxen that had been deprived of their hind legs. They wriggled their way around on the rocks, and pushed each other aside with a rudeness that indicated an ignorance of the ways of polite society. The stronger insisted on the right of way, without the least regard to the feelings of the rest; and when a small seal had secured a comfortable place on the rocks, he was ousted by the first big fellow that came along. They kept up a continual bellowing, and the major said that in times past this bellowing served a useful purpose in warning ships that they were approaching the Farallones.



SEA-LIONS ON THE FARALLON ISLANDS.

In the water the huge fellows were far more graceful than on the rocks. They swim rapidly, and dive to great depths in pursuit of the fish that form their food; and when once they get sight of a fish he must move at a lively gait to escape them. Hundreds of them were playing in the breakers in front of where our friends were standing, and the boys

thought they had never seen any motions more graceful than those of a swimming sea-lion. The major said that the heavier the surf the more did these amphibious creatures appear to enjoy it, and sometimes they remained for hours in the breakers, rising on the crest of the waves, and then diving below, just as it seemed impossible for them to avoid being dashed on the sharp rocks.

The whistle sounded to indicate that the landing of supplies for the light-house had been completed, and the steamer was ready to return to San Francisco. In a little while the boys were again on board and heading for the Golden Gate, well pleased with their visit to the birds and sea-lions of the Farallon Islands.



LIGHT-HOUSE ON THE FARALLON ISLANDS.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A VOYAGE TO THE NORTH PACIFIC.—HUNTING THE FUR SEAL.

ON their return to San Francisco, our friends went directly on board the steamer *Charles M. Scammon*, which was to be their home during their cruise along the coast. She was generally known as the *Scammon*, and was named after a gentleman who has had a long and varied experience on the Pacific Ocean in command of various ships, and is the author of an interesting work on the mammals of the west coast of North America. The boys found her a very comfortable vessel of about a thousand tons' burden, and admirably adapted to the business in which she was engaged.

They learned, after going on board, that they were the guests of the Alaska Commercial Company, which has a lease of the fur-seal islands of the North Pacific. The steamer was owned by the Company, and her special mission was to carry supplies to the islands and bring away the captured seal-skins.

She left San Francisco at daylight on the following morning, and by the time the sun and the boys were up she was well outside the Golden Gate, and had turned her prow to the northward. The day was delightful, the sky being without a cloud, and the air of that agreeable temperature that makes it neither too hot nor too cold. Unfortunately for their rate of progress, the wind was directly in their faces, and the captain of the *Scammon* told them that the prevailing wind on the coast during the summer is from the north. "When we come back," said he, "we will get along fast enough; but on the upward trip we must have a great deal of patience and coal. Steamers will sometimes be four days going from the Golden Gate to the mouth of the Columbia River, while they make the return trip in two."

Nothing of special importance occurred during the voyage. The steamer held her course so that she was generally in sight of land, and at times she ran among the islands, and seemed to be in an inland lake. She stopped a few hours at Victoria, in Vancouver's Island, and again at



SITKA, OR NEW ARCHANGEL, CAPITAL OF ALASKA.

Sitka, the capital of what was once the Russian Territory of Alaska, but was transferred several years ago to the United States.

It was raining when they reached the latter point, and for their consolation the boys were told that Sitka has the reputation of being one of the most rainy places in the world. Directly back of the town is Mount Edgecumbe, an extinct volcano, nearly eight thousand feet high, but the clouds and fogs hang round it so much that the summit is rarely visible. The town stands on a narrow strip of lowland at the base of this mountain, and the most prominent building in it is the military head-quarters, formerly the residence of the Russian governor. It stands on a rocky hill, and has a flight of steps leading up to it. To the right and left of the hill are the houses of the residents, and there is a large church after the Russian model, with its roof and spires painted a bright green. The Russian Fur Company used to have its principal depots at Sitka, and sometimes had a million dollars' worth of furs accumulated there awaiting transportation to Europe.

On the way northward from Sitka, the boys learned a good deal about the Pribylov Islands, where they were bound, and by the time the islands were reported in sight they had filled their note-books with a store of information more or less useful. From their notes we will quote the following:

"The Pribylov Islands are four in number, and their united area is not more than sixty square miles. They are useless for any purposes of agriculture, and their only importance is in the large yield of fur-bearing seal. They return a revenue to the United States Government of three hundred thousand dollars annually, and the Company that has the lease of the islands is supposed to be making a good profit out of the business. Five millions of seals go there every year, and by the terms of the lease the number to be killed is restricted to one hundred thousand. The lease was given in 1870 for a term of twenty years, and is liable to be forfeited if any of its provisions are violated.

"The most important of the seal islands are St. Paul and St. George, and of these the former is of much the greater consequence, as it is visited by nearly if not quite twenty times as many seals as St. George. They are the only seal islands worth mentioning in the world. The Russians found out their value a hundred years ago, and by a careful system of preservation they prevented the destruction of the important business of sending seal-skins to market. There are several seal islands in the South Pacific, but they were entirely depopulated through the greediness of the men who visited them, twenty or thirty years ago. One hunter

boasted that he did not allow a single seal to escape from an island he visited, but slaughtered old and young without the least regard for the future. There were fears that the Pribylov Islands would be treated in the same way when the territory was transferred to the United States by Russia, but the prompt action of the Government prevented such a calamity.

"The islands were discovered and occupied by the Russians in 1786, and a colony of one hundred persons was placed there. The descendants



A SEAL FAMILY AT HOME.

of these colonists are living on the islands to-day, and no others are allowed to settle there. The population is something less than three hundred men, women, and children, and they have the exclusive privilege of kill-

ing and skinning the seals. The Company pays them forty cents for each skin, and as the product is a hundred thousand, the annual income of this village amounts to forty thousand dollars. They buy what they want in the stores of the Company at the wholesale prices of the San Francisco market, and indulge in a goodly number of luxuries. By the terms of the lease, and also for reasons of policy, the Company does not permit the sale of intoxicating liquors, and thus manages to maintain good order in the little community. The colonists are natives of the Aleutian Islands, and devout members of the Greek Church. They are a simple-minded and docile people; and as long as their tendency to intemperance is held in check, they are eminently peaceable and orderly. They are supervised by the Company's agents, and have their priests, who look after their spiritual wants."

In due time the *Scammon* reached St. Paul's Island, and the boys went ashore. What they saw and did while there we will let them tell in their own words:

"This is the funniest place you ever saw: acres and acres covered so thick with seals that the ground and rocks are black with them; and then they don't run away at sight of man, as nearly every other wild animal does, but they stand or sit and look at you while you walk within two or three feet of them. We have been out among them with the agent of the Company, and they opened a little lane for us to go through, and then closed it up behind us; and there were thousands and thousands of them—fifty thousand at least.

"This is the way the seals live: When the snow and ice disappear—about the beginning of May—the first of the seals come here. They are the bulls, or full-grown males, and they immediately proceed to pick out the places they are to live on. Each seal takes a lot about ten feet square, and when he has chosen it he never leaves it till the end of the season—about three months. A curious circumstance is, that he takes no food or water in all that time, and how he manages to live is a puzzle to most people.

"The females do not come till after the first of June, so that the males are there for more than a month quite by themselves. They pass the time in fearful fights and making a great noise, and even after they are joined by their mates they have a good many battles. They weigh from three to five hundred pounds apiece, and therefore a fight between a pair of them is no small affair. We saw one of these combats while we were out on our first walk, and the way the two champions tore each other with their teeth, and struggled among the rocks, was enough to con-

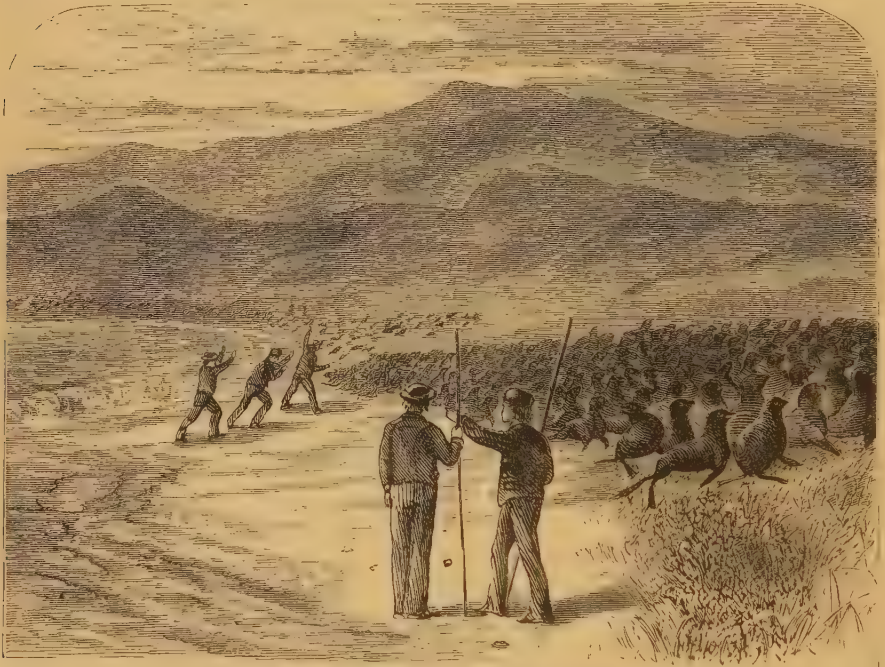


FIGHT BETWEEN TWO SEALS.

vince us that they were in earnest; and we are told that they are in real dead earnest, for a good many of the seals are killed in these battles. A seal will die rather than leave the spot he has picked out for his home; and if he thinks another is trying to intrude he does not wait for an invitation, but pitches in at once.

“The old seals take full possession of the ground where the females expect to come, and they drive the young ones off by themselves. The young fellows form a colony of their own, and do not quarrel after the fashion of their elders. It was among these that we took our walk, and not in the family quarters, as it is dangerous to venture where the old bulls are. A gentleman of our party, Doctor Tonner, went rather nearer than was agreeable to the head of a family, and the latter chased him. It was laughable to see the doctor running over the rocks and slipping, while the seal was after him, and bouncing along by short jumps. We threw stones at the seal, and attracted his attention long enough to give the doctor a chance to get away. If he had been overtaken the consequences might have been serious, as these seals can inflict severe wounds with their teeth, and have been known to bite off a man’s arm in their rage.

"The 'rookeries' and 'hauling-grounds' extend about twenty miles along the beach of St. Paul's Island; the former name is applied to the region where the families are, and the latter to the place where the young fellows live by themselves. The rookeries are not disturbed by the hunters, partly for the reason that the fur of the old fellows is not so good as



STARTING THE DRIVE FROM THE HAULING-GROUNDS.

that of the young ones, but mainly because it is not desirable to diminish the number of breeding seals. It is the rule to kill no seal under one year of age nor over six, and by adhering to it the number is kept good from year to year.

"We went to the hauling-grounds to see how they capture the seals, and found that it was very much like capturing a flock of sheep. The natives went in among them and selected two or three thousand males between two and four years old, just as a butcher selects from a drove of cattle; then they started them overland to the slaughtering-ground, which is close by the village, and in front of the houses where the skins are salted and made ready for shipment. The men got between the seals and the beach, and by shouting and waving their hands induced the animals to move on.

“They must drive the seals very slowly, as the least exertion heats them, and spoils the skins so that the hair falls off. The rule is not to make them go more than half a mile an hour, unless the weather is very cold, and even then a good many are lost by overheating. The seal appears to be a very delicate animal, as he cannot endure warmth in any shape. The fogs that almost constantly envelop the islands are their protection, and they enjoy them greatly. If the sun comes out for a few hours only, with the thermometer not above fifty degrees, it makes the seals so uncomfortable that those on the hauling-grounds go into the water, and the others manifest their discomfort in various ways; but as soon as the fog comes again everything is lovely, and those that have fled to the sea return to their former places.

“When the drive has been started, the seals are stretched out for a long distance on the path, so that two or three thousand of them will make a column half a mile long. When they show signs of fatigue they are allowed to stop to cool, but, even with all precautions, some of them die on the way, as can be seen by the skeletons along the track. When they have reached the killing-grounds, they are herded together for sev-



DRIVING SEALS OVERLAND.



FUR-SEAL ROOKERY ON ST. PAUL'S ISLAND.

eral hours, and sometimes for an entire day, so that they can become thoroughly cooled off before slaughtering. A few men and boys watch them to prevent their straying, and they remind you of herders watching their sheep.

“We went a little way with the drive to see how it was managed, and then continued our inspection of the rookeries. Some of these are quite near the village; and as you look out from the windows of the principal house of the Company you can see thousands of the seals of various ages, and if you could not see, on account of the fog, you would be sure to hear them. The roaring is continuous, on account of the quarrels of the old ones. It is a pity they fight so much, as they not only tear and kill each other, but they trample a good many of the young pups, and roll over them in their struggles. A pup seal is of no consequence when a great fellow weighing three or four hundred pounds has rolled over him two or three times, and crushed him as flat as a very thin pancake. It is estimated that at least two per cent. of the young seals are killed in this way. It may not seem a very large percentage, but when we remember



BULLS QUARRELLING.

that about four hundred thousand seals are born here every year the figures mount up to a respectable size.

“Two old bulls were perched on some rocks, and stood there snarling, and evidently proposing a fight. Each was daring the other to hit the

first blow, and they were so long about it that they gave us a chance to make a sketch of them. It is a curious fact that they can handle themselves much better on the rocks than on level ground; on the rocks they can run as fast as a man, but when the ground is smooth he can easily get away from them. They are fond of getting on the highest rocks, and the most of their fights grow out of the selection of places, and the real or fancied intrusions they make on each other's premises.

"The agent here says that the male seals are much more attentive to the young than the females are. The latter will run away to the sea when alarmed, and leave the pups to themselves, but the bulls mount guard and fight desperately for the protection of the infants. But as the little fellows grow able to look out for themselves, the bulls are less watchful, and by the end of the season they consider their duty over.

"You know that young kittens and puppies swim the first time they are thrown into the water, and so do the young of nearly all quadrupeds. But the seal, whose home is in the water, does not seem to have an instinct for it, and his first attempt to swim is a very awkward performance. He flounders about like a boy who is learning to swim; and if he began his practice anywhere except in the little pools and eddies where the water is smooth, he would run a great risk of drowning. They persevere, however, and in a month or six weeks after the first trial they are good swimmers. By the time they are a year old they have learned the art to perfection. They go away from the island in October and November, and do not return till the following year; and if they did not have a great deal of practice before starting, they would not be able to sustain themselves through the winter.

"The little seals are very playful, and they like to get together in parties of a hundred or more for a good frolic, either on land or in the water. The older seals are very graceful swimmers, and can move and turn with wonderful rapidity. In swimming, they keep their bodies quite under water, and only come occasionally to the surface. They run or swim races through the surf, and sometimes a party of them seem to be playing tag, and entering into the spirit of it like a lot of boys just out of school.

"When they go away in the autumn, they rarely or never touch land again till their return to the Pribylov Islands. They are found two or three hundred miles at sea, and it is thought that they go down the coast of North America a distance of two or three thousand miles, or to the shores of Siberia; and yet they never forget how to reach these islands, and can hold their course to them as directly as the most experienced ship-master with the best instruments that science can furnish.

"But the seals have had time to cool, and now we will see how they are killed. A dozen or fifteen men attend to this work, and they have some long, heavy clubs that require strong arms to wield them. They work under the direction of an overseer, who selects the seals to be slaughtered, and allows all those that are too young, or are not in good condition, to escape. From fifty to a hundred seals are taken from the herd and driven a little to one side, and then the men surround them and make them huddle into a heap with their heads in the air. A single well-directed blow finishes the seal, as it crushes the skull and kills him instantly.

"When three or four hundred have been killed, the work is stopped so that the skins may be removed. This must be done very promptly,



KILLING FUR-SEALS.

as the bodies of the animals begin to decay in a few hours, especially if the weather is at all warm, and the least decay is an injury to the skin.

"The men, from long practice, are very expert at skinning seals, and some of them will remove a pelt from the body of a medium-sized animal inside of two minutes. There are only a few who can do this, and the

average time required is under five minutes, so that one man can easily skin a dozen seals in an hour.



SKINNING A SEAL.

“After the skin is taken off it is carried to the salt-houses, where it is spread out on a bench, with the fleshy side uppermost, and liberally covered with salt. It lies in this condition for ten or twelve days, and is then sufficiently pickled to be ready for bundling. It has another sprinkling of salt before it is folded up; and as it is not desirable to be economical in the use of the preservative article, the cost of salt is a considerable item in the Company’s expenses.

“The skins go to London as the best fur market

of the world, and are sold there just as they have left the islands. The dressing of the skins is a separate business that the Alaska Commercial Company does not trouble itself with, being quite content to dispose of the fur in its raw state. The rough skins sell for about ten dollars each; and when dressed and finished they are worth from twenty dollars upward. The long hair is pulled out, so as to leave only the short, thick fur, and the whole surface is dyed, to give it the proper color and make it even throughout. Nearly every fur-dresser has secret processes of his own that he protects with the greatest care, and they are constantly endeavoring to improve on the work of their rivals.

“The flesh of the seals is a prime article of food among the natives; they eat it fresh in summer, and dry or salt it for winter. The fat is secured by means of try-pots, and the annual collection of this article is no small



THE SKIN AFTER REMOVAL.

matter. The smell of the killing-grounds is not particularly agreeable, and therefore we will not stay there any longer than is necessary to see how the operation of securing the skin is performed."



COAST OF ALASKA NEAR ST. PAUL'S ISLAND.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AMONG THE WHALES.—INCIDENTS OF WHALE-FISHING.

AS soon as the steamer had landed the supplies brought from San Francisco, and taken on board the skins that were ready for transportation to market, she was announced to start on the return journey. On her southerly voyage she did not touch at Sitka, but proceeded directly to San Francisco. The winds favored her, and in far less time than she had consumed in going to the North she was entering the Golden Gate.

The voyage promised at first to be a monotonous one, but the promise was not kept.

One day, while they were loitering around the ship, and endeavoring to while away the time, our friends were startled by a report of whales in sight. They ran to see the monsters of the ocean, and sure enough there they were.

There were at least a dozen whales visible not more than a mile away, and right in the track of the steamer. As they drew near, the boys could distinctly make out the forms of the huge fellows ploughing through the water, and both Harry and George wished they could stop and have a day's sport in whale-fishing. They expressed their wish to the captain, who answered that possibly they might encounter a whale-ship; and, if so, he would certainly stop long enough for them to see something of the business of catching the largest game in the world.

Their wish was gratified before the day was over; for about an hour after passing this school they sighted a ship which the captain at once pronounced to be the *Neptune*, commanded by an old friend of his, Captain Nordhoff. Soon after discovering the ship, they saw that her boats were out, and having lively work in a school of whales.

The steamer's course was changed, and a moment later another ship came into view, about five miles farther on than the *Neptune*. It was soon ascertained that her boats were out, and the promise of an interesting scene increased rapidly.

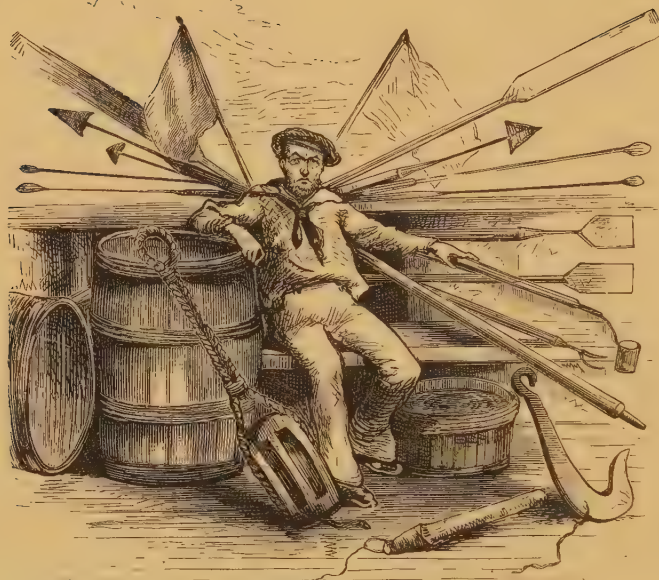
Now the school was distinctly visible; there were half a dozen whales quite close together, and three boats were among them, with the evident intention of making as much havoc as possible. One was fast to a whale that had "sounded," or gone down toward the bottom and drawn the line after him, and the six men in the boat were all occupied in tending the line, to see that he did not take out too much of it. Another boat had just struck a whale that was making off like a race-horse, and towing his tormentors as though it was fun for him to exercise his strength in that way; while the third boat, which came from the distant ship, was furling its sail and getting ready for work. The men were at the oars, and there was a good prospect that within the next five minutes another whale would feel the prick of the harpoon.

The captain took the boys with him on the bridge of the steamer, so that they could have the best possible view of the operations of the Nimrods of the sea; and while they stood there he explained to them the



IN A SCHOOL OF WHALES.

peculiarities of the whale-fishery, and told them some of his personal experiences in the business. The captain was a native of New Bedford, and



A WHALEMAN AND HIS IMPLEMENTS.

his first years at sea were passed on a whale-ship. He had risen to the command of the vessel on which he first sailed as foremast-hand, and at one time he hoped to continue a whaler till he was able to retire with a comfortable fortune.

"It's the finest sport in the world," said he, "to chase a full-grown whale and feel that you are to master him. It's intelligence against strength; and not altogether that either, for the whale has a good deal of intelligence in addition to his strength. You must exercise all your powers of reason, and even then he will sometimes get the best of you.

"Your weapons are not numerous, but they should be of the best quality. Your lances must be of the best steel, so as to have a fine cutting edge; and your harpoons, with steel heads that hook under the skin of the whale and stay there, should have the softest and toughest of iron for their shanks, so that they will bend and lie flat against his sides without breaking. The line attached to the harpoon is of the best Manila-hemp that can be procured, and combines strength with compactness.

"When I first went to sea," he continued, "we relied altogether on the old-fashioned harpoon and lance for killing our prey; but since gun-

powder came into general use there is no reason why the whales should escape its benefits, and they haven't. Bomb-lances have been invented which throw a bomb-shell into the whale's vitals and explode it there. It is a most deadly weapon, as it performs a work that was impossible for the old lance."

One of the boys wished to know how it was made, and the captain described it to them.

"The first invention of that sort," said he, "was a small cannon in the bows of the boat to shoot the harpoon into the whale from a greater distance, and with more force than was possible by hand. A few feet of chain were attached to the harpoon and connected with the line, so that the latter should not be injured, and the theory of the inventor was an excellent one; but he did not allow for the difficulty of aiming the cannon in a boat that was constantly bobbing up and down on the waves, and never staying quiet for an instant. The scheme didn't work.

"The next one was for shooting the harpoon, and afterward the lance,



THE YOUNG HARPOONER.

from a gun held to the shoulder like an ordinary rifle. This worked fairly, but it was not of any great account, and was soon set aside by the bomb-lance. The latter weapon has a large-bored gun-barrel set on the shaft of the harpoon, and parallel with it. The barrel carries an explosive

shell instead of a solid ball, and when the harpoon is thrown into a whale and the line is tightened, the gun is discharged.

"The shell goes directly into the body of the whale, and generally explodes in his vitals. Since this weapon was invented, many a whale has been killed by it, and it has been adopted by nearly all the whalers now in the business. There is another kind of gun that throws a bomb into the whale without the harpoon, but it is not intended for use till the boat has made fast to its game. There, there, they're using it now! look at 'em!"

As he spoke, there was a little puff of smoke from one of the boats, followed by the report of the gun. Evidently the whale was severely hurt, as he threw his great body half out of water, and lashed about furiously with his tail.

"He's got it," said the captain. "He's in his flurry now, and as good as dead. When the whale lashes about in that way, he is in his death struggles, and we call it flurry."

"That's the time we have to look out for him, as he is likely to do some damage if you give him half a chance. I've known a whale to smash a boat all to kindling-wood after he had got his death-blow. Sometimes they throw themselves clean out of water, and in falling come across a boat, so that she is smashed instantly. The men get away the best way they can, and are picked up by the other boats, and it occasionally happens that some of them are killed. The most dangerous time with a whale is when he's in his flurry, but the blessing about it is that it doesn't generally last long."

As if to illustrate what the captain was saying, the whale brought his tail down in such a way as to smash the boat from which the bomb had been fired. All the men managed to escape, some by swimming, and others by clinging to the fragments of the boat. In a few minutes the whale lay quite dead on the surface of the water, and gave practical evidence of the power of the bomb-lance when properly handled.

A little flag was stuck in the whale, to indicate that he was dead, and also to avoid any dispute as to his ownership. Sometimes when the boats of different ships are in a school, a question arises about the possession of a prize, and there have been quarrels in consequence. The flag is marked so as to indicate to what ship it belongs, and consequently a mistake is not likely to occur when this precaution has been taken. Another boat came from the ship and took the whale in tow, and in due time he was brought along-side.

"They are starting the try-works for him," said the captain, as he saw

SMASHING THE BOAT.



a smoke rising from the deck of the *Neptune*. "They have all they want to do now, as they'll have two or three whales to cut up and try out as fast as they can attend to them."

"How do they hoist the whale on board?" one of the boys asked. "I should think they would need a steam-engine to do it, and a strong one too."

The captain laughed, and said the whale was not taken on board at all. He looked through his glass at the ship, and then exclaimed,



THE WHALE IN TOW.

"They've got one along-side now, and are cutting^{ing} him in. We'll see how it is done."

As they approached the *Neptune*, the captain told the boys how the whalemén performed the operation of "cutting in."

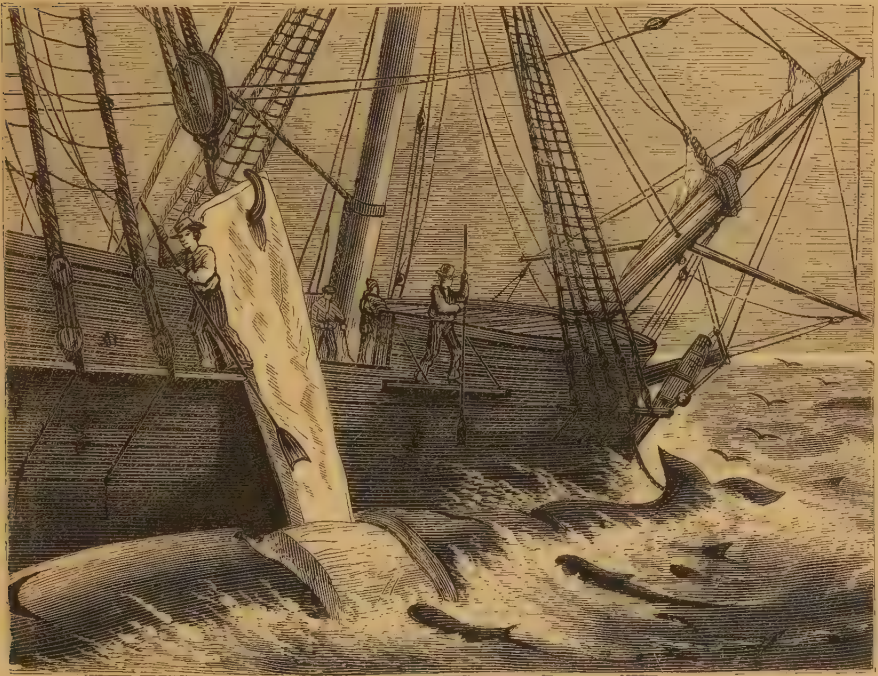
"They get him along-side, first," said he, "with his eye about opposite the gangway. There they have a very large tackle-block, with a three-inch Manila-rope running through it. There are two of these blocks quite independent of each other, the object being for one of them to be lowered while the other is coming in, and thus a fresh grip can be taken when a slice has come on board.

"They begin by cutting with a long-handled spade that is operated by one of the mates, who stands on a little staging slung over the side of the ship. When they have started enough to give holding-ground for the hook, a sailor goes down over the side and inserts it in the place where the whale's eye was. He has a dangerous business before him, as he has the great block to handle, and may be caught between it and the side of the ship, or he may slip from the whale and get a bite from a

shark. There are always plenty of these thieves about ready to feed on the whale as soon as his jacket is off, and sometimes they don't wait for that before they begin. The man removes his boots before going down, and has nothing on his feet but a pair of very thick woollen stockings. With his boots he could not hold on a moment, but the stockings catch on the skin of the whale, and enable him to cling there.

"All hands are hold of the tackle-ropes; and when the spades have cut the strip and fairly started it, the order is given to haul away. The great block goes upward, the spades keep on cutting, and in a few minutes the strip, or 'blanket,' as it is called, has gone toward the sky till it is two-thirds the height of the main-mast. Then the second tackle is fastened in near the level of the deck, and when it is all secure the blanket is cut through above it, and swung in till it is over the hatch that leads to the blubber-room.

"Then the piece is lowered and dropped into the blubber-room, where



"CUTTING IN" A WHALE.

a man stows it away, and makes the pieces fit as closely as he can. By the time the second tackle is up the first is ready to relieve it, and so they

go on till the whole covering of the whale has been stripped off from his eye to his tail. The cut is made in a spiral form, and the body of the whale turns over and over as the blanket is unrolled. If it is a sperm-whale, the head is detached and secured, as it contains a very large amount of the finest oil."

The boys opened their eyes in astonishment when the captain told them that the oil from the head of a sperm-whale was dipped out with a bucket, and sometimes amounted to twenty barrels or more.

"Did you say twenty barrels?" Harry asked, as if he could hardly believe his ears.

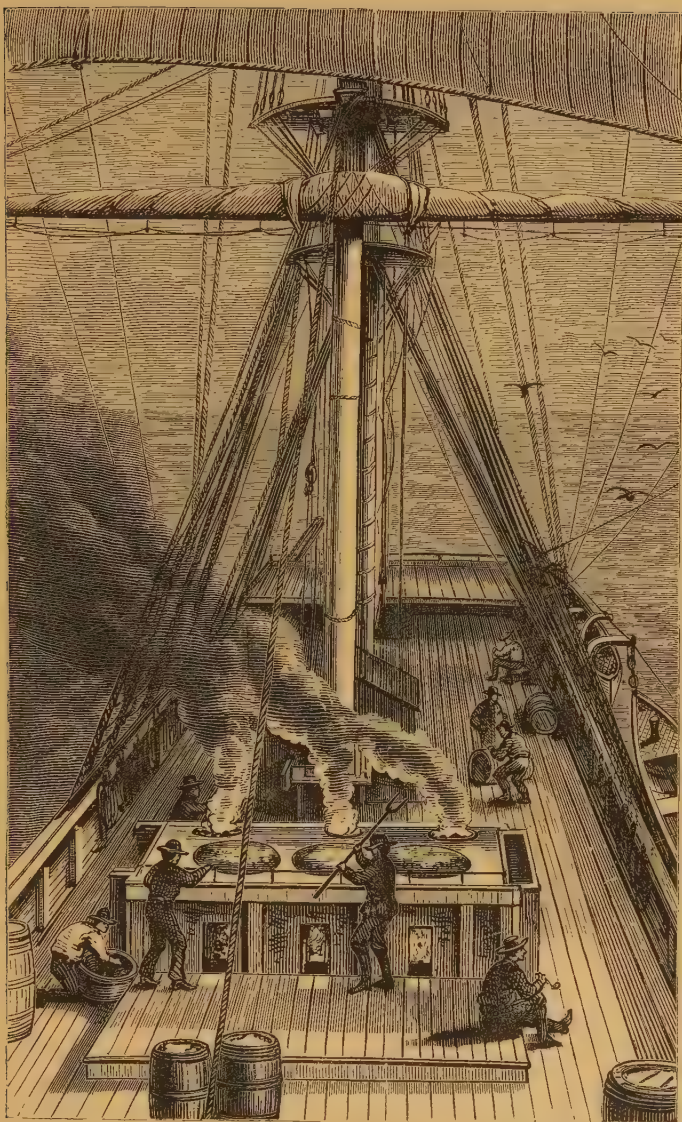
"Yes," was the reply, "twenty barrels and more. I have known the head of a sperm-whale to yield twenty-three barrels of spermaceti, the most valuable oil that the whale produces; and I have heard of one that gave twenty-seven barrels, but I didn't see him myself."

By this time the steamer was along-side the ship, and while the two captains were holding a conversation, the boys were watching the process of cutting in. They could also look down on the deck of the *Neptune*, and see the try-pots, where the rich blubber or fat of the whale was to be reduced to oil. They were simmering slowly over the remains of a previous catch, and were not in full action, as everybody except the cook and the man at the wheel was occupied with the work of securing the captures of the day.

When the conversation was ended the steamer moved on and resumed her course. A few miles to the southward a dense smoke was seen rising from a ship. The boys thought at first it was a steamer, but were soon undeceived, as the captain told them it was a ship engaged in "trying out."

"A whale furnishes the fuel for cooking him," said the captain, "except that we have to use a little wood for starting the first fire. The scraps make excellent fuel, and a whale makes more than enough for trying him out. When we have done with a whale we save scraps for the second starting, and therefore we never need use any wood after the first capture.

"We have great pots or kettles set in brickwork on the deck, with little furnaces beneath where the fires are built. The blubber is passed up from the blubber-room, and cut into thin slices, so that the oil can readily free itself. Some of the men watch the fires, while one of the officers keeps an eye on the oil to see that it is secured when it is of the proper color. The value of the oil depends greatly upon this color, and the men in charge of the work cannot be too careful.



TRYING OUT.

“While they are engaged in trying out, the men have little time for anything else. The main-sail is furled and the top-sails reefed, and the ship drifts and floats pretty much as she likes. It is hard work, and everybody is glad when it is over. There is not an idle person on board, and one of the busiest of the lot is the cooper. It is his duty to get the casks ready for the oil, and to head them up when they have been properly filled; and when his day’s work is done there isn’t a man more ready to go to sleep than the cooper.”



CARCASS OF A WHALE.

Harry inquired how many barrels of oil they usually obtained from a whale.

“I can’t answer that question without an explanation,” replied the captain. “Some kinds of whales produce more than others, and then in a school of one kind you find them of different sizes.

“Here are some of the figures about the yield of oil in whales. I have taken a sperm-whale myself that yielded one hundred and nine barrels, but he was not as large as another that was taken by a ship I sailed in before I was captain. That one gave one hundred and thirteen bar-

rels, and he smashed two boats and fought us four hours before we succeeded in killing him.

"The ship *James Arnold*, of New Bedford, took in one season eight whales, every one of which made more than one hundred barrels; the largest of them gave one hundred and thirty-seven of as good oil as you would wish to see. At the same time and on the same ground another ship killed ten sperm-whales, and the whole lot of them made eleven hundred and forty barrels. The largest I ever heard of was a monster that gave one hundred and forty-five barrels, and he was probably not far from a hundred feet long, though he wasn't measured.

"The whale-fishery has greatly declined in the past twenty years, owing to the destruction of the whales and the difficulty of catching the few that remain. The discovery of petroleum reduced the price of oil so that the business became unprofitable, and it is doubtful if it ever revives."

The steward's bell announcing dinner brought the conversation to an end. When the boys returned to the deck they saw a ship under full sail a little ahead of them, and not far off was the carcass of a whale that was furnishing a feast for the sharks and sea-birds. The water was alive with sharks, while the birds swept round and round, watching their opportunities for satisfying their appetites, and keeping well out of reach of their companions at the feast. It was a scene of life on the ocean wave, and the boys watched it intently till the rapidly increasing distance left the dead whale and his devourers behind them and out of sight. The night clouds fell, and the steamer ploughed steadily onward. In the morning neither whales nor whalers were visible, and the rest of the voyage to San Francisco was without incident worthy of mention.

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